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ABSTRACT

This project was designed to develop instructional materials to prepare teachers of students with disabling conditions and other professional personnel to assume responsibilities as classroom managers and supervisors. The first two parts of the manual, for policy makers, administrators, and staff developers, contain: (1) information about the changing roles of teachers and paraprofessionals; (2) responsibilities of administrators for supporting and preparing teachers to assume these responsibilities; and (3) guidelines for using the materials to conduct training. Following sections contain the instructional modules, including trainer material, suggested activities, and a list of 21 references and resources. The instructional modules cover the topics of management and supervision; the teacher and paraprofessional as an instructional team; and the process of integrating the paraprofessional into the classroom through setting goals and objectives, directing and delegating, communication and team building, problem solving, evaluating and coaching, and planning for change. A performance/skills survey for teacher-managers is included, along with worksheets, problem-solving activities, case studies, and other handouts. (JDD)

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# A TRAINING PROGRAM TO PREPARE TEACHERS TO SUPERVISE AND WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

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EC 302057

CASE 01-86

Revised 1989

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals
in Special Education and Related Services
New Careers Training Laboratory
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This manual was developed by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education (NRC), located at Center for Advanced Study in Education, Graduate School and University Center, of the City University of New York, through a grant from the Secretary's Discretionary Programs of the United States Department of Education (Grant number G00 8410023). The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the USDE and no official endorsement should be inferred.


Any part of this material may be reproduced and used to train teachers and other supervisory personnel to work with paraprofessionals and other support personnel. We do request, however, that you acknowledge the source of the material.

## PREFACE

The passage and implementation of P.L.94-142, the landmark legislation requiring a free appropriate public education for all students with disabilities, led to significant changes in staffing arrangements in local education agencies (LEAs) nationwide. The impact of providing new and improved educational services in the least restrictive environments to all children and youth with special needs has brought about major changes in the roles and responsibilities of teachers and all other professional personnel who provide related services. These changes have caused policy makers to seek alternative sources of humanpower. As a result they have turned to paraprofessional workers to supplement and enhance the programmatic and administrative functions of teachers.

Despite the fact that paraprofessionals have become major contributors in in the delivery of all education services, their training, deployment, and supervision have remained informal and unstructured in many local school systems; and administrators, staff developers and teachers are at best unevenly aware of the expanded roles for paraprofessionals that have developed over the last decade. The work of this project was designed to develop instructional materials to prepare teachers and other professional personnel to assume responsibilities as classroom managers and supervisors; duties that they usually are not prepared for during their preservice training. This manual is divided into two sections. Part one is for policy makers, administrators, and staff developers. It contains: 1) information about the changing roles of teachers and paraprofessionals, 2) establishes the responsibilities of administrators for supporting and preparing teachers to assume these responsibilities, and 3) provides guidelines for using the materials to conduct the training. Part two contains the instructional modules including trainer material, suggested activities, and and other resources.

It should be noted that while the work of this project was designed to meet the needs of teachers working in programs for students with disabling conditions, many of the activities contained in the training modules are appropriate for teachers in general and compensatory education. While their duties as program managers and supervisors of support staff are not as universally recognized as those of their colleagues in special education, that is bound to change in the future. Particularly as the initiatives presently underway to unite general and special education continue and gain momentum and as the efforts to redefine and restructure the roles of all teachers become reality.

Revised 1989.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These instructional materials were pilot tested in three locales covering a cross section of geographic and demographic areas and educational delivery systems. The agencies that participated in the pilot testing were: The Mansfield (Ohio) City Schools, St. Michaels Association for Special Education, The Navajo Nation (Arizona), and the Division of Special Education, Lower Camden County Regional High School District 1 (New Jersey). Throughout the various phases of the pilot testing, there were several people who assisted us. We are particularly grateful to Leonard Fitts, the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Gayle Amos, the Supervisor of Instruction for Special Education in the Lower Camden County Regional District for their personal encouragement and support as well as for the humanpower and other resources that were contributed by the district. Velma Spenser, the Adminstrator and Eugene Thompson, the Assistant Administator, of St. Michaels Association, deserve special thanks for their continuing commitment of time, resources and concern for improving the performance and opportunities for career advancement for paraprofessionals. Robert Ludick, Director of Pupil Services for the Mansfield Public Schools, actively reached out and recruited teachers to participate in the project. Barbara Williams Byrd from the North Central Ohio Special Education Regional Resource Center served as a liaison between the NRC and the Mansfield City Schools. She also, as did Leonard Fitts, drove the project director (a New Yorker who does not have a driver's license) to and from the test site and the airport/railroad station, time consuming efforts in both cases.

Special recognition and gratitude are extended to all of the teachers who participated so whole heartedly in the pilot testing. Their verbal feedback and written evaluations about the philosophy and goals of the training, the content and exercises contributed immeasurably to our efforts. Their suggestions for making the material more relevant to the needs of teachers were incorporated into the modules.

In addition to the agencies that participated in the formal assessment process, there were other opportunities to present portions of the material and gather feedback about the training. These sessions took place at workshops and seminars sponsored by the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities in Pittsburgh, the Office of Education of the New Jersey Department of Human Resources, and Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma.

John Formanek helped with the design, writing and testing of the manual and Karen Faison evaluated the material by participating in the pilot testing at St. Michaels and reviewing the content and format of the instructional material.

Finally, Lucille Mascetti has typed the various versions of the manual and never lost her patience or sense of humor despite the changes in the format and content that took place.

Anna Lou Pickett
Project Director

PART I

# PREPARING TEACHERS TO BE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISORS AND CLASSROOM MANAGERS: THE ROLE OF ADMINISTRATORS

# PREPARING TEACHERS TO BE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISORS AND CLASSROOM MANAGERS

## Introduction

Throughout the 1980s, private and public agencies concerned with improving the quality and status of education have focused considerable attention on the role and performance of teachers and other education professionals. For the most part these efforts assumed that the traditionally recognized role of the teacher had remained unchanged. Therefore, their recommendations dealt primarily with developing higher standards for recruiting and training personnel to do the same basic job. A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century, issued by the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986), was one of the first major efforts to look at the changing and expanding roles of teachers and to build, in part, their recommendations on these changes.

They proposed, that among other changes in roles, teachers should be viewed as managers of multiple human resources including paraprofessionals, parents, peer tutors, volunteers from the business community and other arenas such as college intern programs. In fact in today's schools teachers have already assumed these duties and are serving as supervisors of paraprofessionals and other support staff. While these changes began in general education (primarily in elementary education), they have developed even more rapidly in the delivery of services to students with special needs including children and youth with developmental and learning disabilities, limited English, and the disadvantaged who are at risk because their needs are not being met by traditional education programs. And as local school districts move toward school based management and the unification of general and special education the nature of their duties will continue to evolve.

## A Historical Perspective

The recognition of the potential value of paraprofessionals in education began in the late 1950s and 60s when administrators confronted by a shortage of teachers, began to look for alternative means of providing services in order to alleviate an emerging personnel gap. One of the most prominent programs, during the era, was an effort supported by the Ford Foundation in the Bay City, Michigan schools. Teacher aides were recruited and trained to perform clerical chores and occasionally work with small groups of students. In later efforts, teacher aides were employed to serve as liaisons between the schools and community to overcome the growing lack of confidence between the schools and the parents (Gartner, 1971).

## Expanded Use of Paraprofessionals and Other Support Personnel

In special education and its related services, the use of paraprofessionals has occurred as school have attempted to meet increased demands for improved and individualized services for students with diverse learning styles and a broad range of handicapping conditions. Today the roles of paraprofessionals are no longer viewed as being primarily clerical. Instead, they have become technicians and specialists who are integral members of the team that provides direct instructional services to students with special needs (Pickett, 1989 and 1986; [illegible]ler, 1982; Semrau et. al, 1981; White et. al, 1981; and Kaplan, 1980).

## Changing Duties of Teachers

Teachers are increasingly becoming managers of the educational process and supervisors of human resources - particularly in the areas of special education and compensatory education programs for disadvantaged children and youth. Their roles and duties are far more complex and difficult then they were a decade ago. Analysis of the daily functions of special education teachers finds that a major portion of their time is spent on program management and supervisory/administrative tasks (Heller, et. al, 1981). They consult with parents and colleagues, and participate in the development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each of the students in the class; they determine the functioning level of every student using the information provided by the members of the IEP team and the results of their own data collection activities; they design and carry out the individualized programs; they assess the impact of the instruction on student performance; and they revise the programs based on the results of the analysis.

In addition to these programmatic duties their responsibilities now include supervising and coordinating the work of paraprofessionals and other support personnel. They must: 1) set goals and plan for other adults in the classroom, 2) schedule classroom activities of professional and paraprofessional support staff, 3) direct the work of paraprofessionals, 4) assess the on-the-job performance of paraprofessionals, and 5) develop techniques and procedures to improve the skills and performance of paraprofessionals. In short, teachers are classroom managers, who are front-line supervisors and they need the skills to carry out these duties.

## The Roles of Policy Makers and Administrators

The supervisory and management skills teachers require to perform these duties fall into the following basic categories: planning and setting goals, assigning and directing work, giving feedback about performance, coaching, and problem solving. A clear understanding and an awareness of the need for these skills is necessary not only for the teachers who are required to use them daily, but also for policy makers and administrators.

Administrators at both the district and building levels must recognize that good supervisors do not develop in a vacuum. They need nurture and support. This is particularly true for teachers, who may be reluctant or hesitant to assume the responsibilities of directing and assessing the performance of other adults. Particulary since these duties have not been seen as part of their traditional portfolio of tasks. Policy makers, building principals, educational/program consultants and other management personnel in the school district's chain of command, who work directly with teachers in the classroom, must take a more active supportive role in shaping the supervisory functions of teachers; they must also provide opportunities for teachers to develop and practice these skills on the job. (Suggested guidelines for instituting a training and support program are contained in the next section)

## District Level Personnel

The responsibilities of policy makers and administrators at the district level include:

- developing job descriptions and other personnel practices for teachers and paraprofessionals that acknowledge their changing and expanding roles;

- developing and implementing in cooperation with teachers an inservice training program to improve their supervisory and management skills;

- participating in collaborative efforts between state education agencies, other local service providers, and institutions of higher education to develop Baccalaureate and Graduate level coursework that will prepare new teachers to work more effectively with paraprofessionals and other support staff; and

- providing information to building principals and other local supervisors about their roles in assisting teachers to use the skills they acquire during the training.

Building Personnel

The responsibilities of principals and other supervisory/resource staff assigned to work with teachers include:

- being aware of the impact of the additional program management and supervisory responsibilities on the overall performance of teachers;

- being aware of the goals and objectives of inservice training programs and providing constructive feedback to teachers to encourage them to use and maintain the supervisory skills they learn during the training;

- providing/scheduling opportunities for teachers and paraprofessionals to meet regularly for planning and on-the-job coaching sessions;

- being available to provide assistance to the members of the instructional team to enable them to solve interpersonal and other problems that may occur in the classroom; and

- providing teachers and paraprofessionals with the assistance they need to cope effectively with what may sometimes appear to them to be conflicting concerns of policy makers and employees.

By developing and implementing these procedures, strategies and programs, a climate of mutual trust and cooperation will grow at all levels of the service delivery system. Not only will the performance and productivity of the instructional team be improved, the overall quality of service delivery will be increased and improved as well.

The next unit in this section provides suggestions for conducting the teacher training program.

PART II

# PREPARING TEACHERS TO BE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISORS AND CLASSROOM MANAGERS: GUIDELINES FOR USING THE TRAINING PROGRAM

PREPARING TEACHERS TO BE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISORS AND
CLASSROOM MANAGERS: GUIDELINES FOR USING THE TRAINING PROGRAM

## Philosophy of the Training Design

Developing a precise definition for the term training or the process is difficult and often elusive. Training strategies must be flexible and relevant to the needs of the service delivery organization; they must be geared to the recognized needs of the trainees; and trainers must have the freedom to adapt the suggested methodology to suit their individual styles.

The content contained in these instructional materials is based on the results of task analyses and comparisons of the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, teachers and other supervisory personnel conducted by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education over the past decade.

The suggested procedures and guidelines are based on the belief that to be effective training for adults must:

- have a definite purpose and meet specific and identified needs of the participants based on the requirements of the job;
- recognize previous experience and build on demonstrated competencies of the participants;
- provide the participants with an opportunity to try out the theory and newly acquired skills and receive constructive feedback about their performance.

## Strategies for Delivering the Training

While the central core of the information in the modules can be conveyed in a one or two day workshop, if that is the only time available for inservice training, it is recommended that the training be provided in a series of four or five, 2 or 3 hour sessions. As part of the training, the trainer should arrange to observe and/or meet with each participant at least once to facilitate the development of an individual action plan for the participant to follow after the training is completed. (The goal of the action plan should be to enable the teacher to practice and maintain the skills gained during the training.) This approach will enable the participants to: 1) try out the skills and concepts presented in the training after each session; 2) share experiences and results with other participants; 3) develop a strategy for providing systematic on-the-job coaching for the paraprofessional in their classroom. Additionally the trainer will be able to identify and set priorities among topics that need to be stressed, during the training sessions, use the exercises and other activities as a basis for making practicum assignments, and assist the participants to develop an individual plan to improve and maintain their supervisory skills.

It would also be beneficial and enhance the functioning of the instructional team if teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals or other supervisors could participate in some of the sessions together. These sessions include: The Teacher and Paraprofessional: An Instructional Team," "Communication and Team Building", and "Problem Solving."

## Who Should do the Training

The content, format, and instructional activities are designed to allow for flexibility in selecting the trainer. Appropriate candidates include district level staff development personnel, principals or other supervisors, consulting or resource teachers, or if necessary and appropriate the training can be self-instructional in consultation with a principal.

## Procedures for Conducting the Training Sessions

The skills and attitudes of a trainer are important factors in creating a positive learning climate. This is particularly true in the case of adult learners who enter a workshop or classroom with a wealth of knowledge and skills acquired during a lifetime of experience. In order to build on these experiences, there are several steps and activities that should be taken before, during, and after each session. Following the procedures will make the trainer more comfortable and improve his/her capacity to communicate more effectively with the participants.

The first, and most important, step is to read and study the material for each module thoroughly and to become familiar with the goals, content and specific training directions. The better a trainer knows the material, the more comfortable s/he will be in presenting it.

Since the trainers will be using material developed by someone else, they may want to modify some of the strategies and instructional methods to reflect their own training style i.e., using lectures, demonstrations, learning by doing, audio-visual aids, and simulation activities/exercises. Further, to arouse the interest of the participants, anecdotes should be developed and used that relate directly to the on-the-job experiences of the participants. The examples and situations should reflect and be consistent with the overall goals of the training, as well as the policies and procedures established by the local school district. By being thoroughly prepared and organized, an inexperienced trainer can overcome fears, reduce stage fright, and be relaxed throughout the training.

## Before the Training

The following are suggestions a trainer may use to facilitate the training process.

- Make sure that sufficient handouts and other materials for the participants are available.
- Make sure equipment that the trainer needs are also available; i.e. transparencies, chalk, markers, chart paper, etc.
- Request AV equipment, set it up, and test it before the session begins. Make sure that there are extention cords, extra lights, adapters, reels, and other special items that might be needed.
- If it is practical, observe and assess the strengths of the trainees as supervisors and classroom managers and determine their training needs before the training begins. If this is not feasible, information gathered through the Performance and Skills Survey (the final activity in Unit I) can serve as a method for providing you and the trainees with this information at the end of the first session.

## During the Training Session

- Set the stage for the session: if participants do not know each other use introductory ice breaker activities at the beginning of the session.

- Outline on a chalk board, chart paper or on an overhead transparency the specific goals of the training session, and describe briefly what the participants will be expected to learn.

- Stress the value and practical application of the training, the beneficial impact it will have on increasing job skills, and improving on-the-job performance.

- Review information and material covered in a previous session before introducing a new lesson.

Some other points to remember about good instruction are:

- Make eye contact with all participants, learn and use their names. Name labels may be worn, or affixed to a table top.

- Never assume that because a participant uses the jargon or terms, that they understand the meaning.

- Stimulate group discussions based on problem solving techniques and develop questions to involve all members of the group.

- Be responsive to expressed needs, questions, requests, and feelings of the participants.

- Remember that adults have a need to move around after sitting for a period of time. Plan break times, and let the group know in advance approximately when they will occur.

## After the Training Session

- Follow up on requests for additional information and resources from the participants.

- Incorporate participants' comments and reactions into future plans and designs for training. (We have included a sample evaluation form at the end of this unit. You may use it, or use one that has been developed by your agency.)

- Use the following questions to do a self-evaluation of the training to determine your strengths and weaknesses:

- Did I check the physical aspects of the classroom to make sure everything was in order and ready? Did I prepare teaching aids in advance?

- Did I learn the names of the trainees?

- Did I address the group effectively? Did I involve and speak to everyone? Did I avoid using mannerisms that might have been distracting? Was I audible? Was I relaxed?

- Did I use words and terms that were clear and understandable?

- Did I follow the procedures I planned for the session? Did I establish goals and objectives that were consistent with the philosophy of the training and the needs of the participants? Did I try new strategies and techniques?

- Did I stimulate group discussions and employ questions freely? Did I stress practical applications? Did I stress learning by doing?

- Did I help participants review and organize the material? Did I help trainees determine their progress and plan for using the new skills?

The Training Modules

There are eight modules in this training program. Each follows the same format and includes: 1) instructional objectives, 2) a brief overview of the unit, 3) the materials and equipment the trainer will need for the session, 4) pre-session procedures, 5) suggested methods and teaching activities, and 6) background information for trainers.

The Modules are:

Management and Supervision: An Introduction
The Teacher and Paraprofessional: An Instructional Team
Integrating the Paraprofessional Into the Classroom:
- Settings Goals and Planning
- Directing and Delegating
- Problem Solving
- Communication and Team Building
- Evaluating and Coaching
- Planning for Change

The final section is a bibliography of references mentioned in the introduction to the manual and the training materials. It also includes additional resources you might want to use to supplement the activities and exercises that are part of the instructional material.

HANDOUT

TRAINING TEACHERS TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISORS
AND PROGRAM MANAGERS

EVALUATION FORM

TO BE COMPLETED BY EACH TRAINEE

Directions: Please complete this questionnaire as fully as you can. Use the 5 point scale for each item circling the rating you feel best describes your opinions on each item. Please be sure to respond to the open-ended questions because the answers will assist us to plan for future sessions.

| | low | | average | | high |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Were the objectives clearly presented? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Were the objectives met? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Quality of the content? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Quality of materials and resources? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Effectiveness of session/format organization? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Use of time for activities? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Effectiveness of activities/experiences? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Effectiveness of presenter(s)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Effectiveness of group participation? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Quality of facilities? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Overall quality of session? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

12. Strengths of the session: _____

_____

_____

_____

13. Weaknesses of the session: _____

_____

_____

_____

14. Suggestions for additional training sessions: _____

_____

_____

_____

PART III

PREPARING TEACHERS TO BE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISORS AND CLASSROOM MANAGERS: THE INSTRUCTIONAL MODULES

MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

## Instructional Objectives

The teacher will be able to:

- discuss his/her feelings about supervising and integrating another adult into the classroom,
- describe the management (supervisory) functions of a classroom teacher,
- describe the qualities of a good supervisor,
- examine and identify his/her individual strengths and weaknesses as a classroom manager.

## Overview

Teachers must be aware of and fully understand how complex their roles and responsibilities have become. They must learn management skills that will enable them to integrate paraprofessionals and other support personnel into the day to day classroom activities and routines ranging from non-instructional chores to active participation in the instructional process. The material and exercises in this unit are divided into two sections. The introductory activities will provide the participants with information about the responsibilities of the teacher as a classroom manager. The final activity will enable the trainees to look at their current mode of management and supervision and identify their individual strengths and weaknesses as a classroom manager. The next unit addresses the roles of the teacher and paraprofessional as members of the instructional team.

## Materials and Equipment

To conduct the activities in this unit you will need:

1. An overhead projector or a chalkboard
2. TRANSPARENCY M-1 "Managerial (Supervisory) Concerns and Functions
3. TRANSPARENCY M-2 "Qualities of a Good Supervisor"
4. Copies of HANDOUT M-1 "The Process and Activities of Management in the Classroom" for each participant, and
5. Copies of HANDOUT M-2 "Performance and Skills Survey" for each participant

## Pre-Session Procedures

1. Review the trainer material and prepare a lecture on the roles and responsibilities of the teacher as a classroom manager stressing the duties and characteristics of a good supervisor. Use the items on TRANSPARENCIES M-1 and M-2 as an outline.

2. Reproduce the TRANSPARENCIES (M-1 and M-2) or, if you do not have an overhead projector, write the items contained in the TRANSPARENCIES on the chalkboard.

3. Duplicate enough copies of HANDOUTS 1 and 2 for all participants.

4. Review the format and individual items on the "Performance and Skills Survey" and the directions for completing the exercise. Stress the following: 1) this is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers; and 2) the results of this inventory will serve as a tool for determining the trainees strengths as a manager, communicator and evaluator as well as determining areas where weaknesses exist and training is needed.

Teaching Procedures

ACTIVITY #1 Prior to delivering the lecture ask the trainees to discuss their feelings and attitudes about working with a paraprofessional and other support personnel and being responsible for supervising, evaluating and integrating the paraprofessional into the instructional process.

ACTIVITY #2 Ask them to identify and list supervisory functions they perform in the classroom.

ACTIVITY #3 Distribute HANDOUT M-1 and deliver the lecture.

ACTIVITY #4 Distribute HANDOUT M-2 the "Performance and Skills Survey" to the trainees and review the directions. Allow 20-25 minutes for the trainees to complete the survey.

ACTIVITY #5 Divide the participants into small groups of 4-6 people matching experienced teachers with new teachers. Ask the groups to discuss their responses to the items on the survey and to share ideas about supervisory techniques they have found effective.

# MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

## The Need for Training in the Process of Management

Few teachers are prepared during their preservice training to work with another adult in the classroom. They are not trained to supervise paraprofessionals, to assign and delegate appropriate responsibilities, to evaluate their on-the-job performance and assess their training needs, or to develop strategies to meet these identified needs. Many teachers have concerns that are usually left unspoken about being responsible for integrating another adult into the classroom. Some may verbalize these "fears" by saying "I'm a loner" or "if I do things by myself then I know they will be done right" or "I'm a teacher not a boss, I don't want to be responsible for ordering someone around or judging them."

Some possible reasons for this may be that for many teachers, supervision denotes control and possible interference; for others supervision has become synonomous with evaluation. These concerns and feelings are an occupational hazard for all of us in education. The problems probably have two sources. the first is our traditional attitude about safeguarding the professional responsbilities and unique roles of the teacher. The second is often linked to a personal reaction to being observed and evaluated by a supervisor who did not clarify the standards they were using, or who did not provide feedback about the results of the assessment.

## The Teacher as Classroom Manager

The term "classroom teacher" no longer defines or embodies the expanded duties a teacher is responsible for. Instead the teacher can more aptly be described as a "classroom manager." Task Analyses of the responsibilities that comprise all aspects of the teacher's duties finds that a major portion of their time is spent on management tasks and functions including planning, organizing and evaluating.

Over the last decade the roles and duties of teachers have become more complex and demanding. Teachers need to learn (or renew) management skills that will enable them to integrate paraprofessionals and other support personnel into the day-to-day activities of the classroom. These skills include: setting goals and planning for another adult in the classroom, directing and delegating appropriate duties, problem solving, communicating with and nurturing staff, assessing on-the-job performance, and coaching/training support personnel. (Use Transparency M-1 as an outline.)

Learning to solve problems, to delegate and share duties, and to instruct the paraprofessional on how to carry out assigned tasks will make the teacher's job easier and the instructional process more productive. In addition to these skills, the teacher must demonstrate an ability to motivate adults to do their job better by reducing stress and creating a positive work climate. The following qualities will enhance the ability of the teacher to be a good supervisor; tact (able to get a person to do tasks willingly); fairness (has an open mind and is willing to listen, sees that

regulations are followed, acknowledges and gives credit for productive ideas, praises a job well done, doesn't expect others to do what s/he wouldn't do); thoroughness (makes certain the job is completed and the instructional or other objectives are met); common sense (gets the facts, thinks about the impact of possible decisions, and then acts); and concern (gives attention to the needs of the paraprofessionals, listens to their ideas, and provides the information the paraprofessionals need to perform their assigned tasks).

TRANSPARENCY: M-1

# CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS FOR TEACHERS

GOAL SETTING

PLANNING AND SCHEDULING

COMMUNICATION AND TEAM BUILDING

DIRECTING AND DELEGATING

EVALUATING ON-THE-JOB PERFORMANCE

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING/COACHING

## QUALITIES OF A GOOD SUPERVISOR

- TACT
- FAIRNESS
- INITIATIVE
- THOROUGHNESS
- COMMON SENSE
- COMMUNICATION SKILL
- SELF UNDERSTANDING

# THE PROCESS AND ACTIVITIES OF MANAGEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

The need to provide improved and increased individualized education services to students with special needs has brought about major changes in the roles and duties assigned to teachers. Not only are they responsible for developing instructional goals and a program to achieve these goals for the students in the classrom, they are also responsible for planning, for directing, and evaluating the work of paraprofessional personnel. While planning programs for students and implementing them requires a knowledge of managerial skills, these functions need to be refocused and adapted to prepare the teacher to supervise and work more effectively with another adult in the classroom.

When teachers examine and analyze the tasks they perform, they find that most of their time is spent in planning, coordinating/supervising, and evaluating. Teachers plan and schedule activities for the students, themselves, the paraprofessional, volunteers and others. They develop instructional objectives for each student and then prepare weekly and daily lesson plans to achieve these objectives. They decide what human and physical resources are needed to implement the instructional program for each student. The teacher then assigns appropriate tasks to the paraprofessional or other support personnel and sets performance and work standards. They hold conferences with parents to involve them in all aspects of their child's education. They also evaluate how well everything is working and determine what changes need to be made in the program plans for the students, schedules, or work assignments for the paraprofessional.

Learning to solve problems, to delegate and share duties, and to instruct the paraprofessional on how to carry out assigned tasks will make the teacher's job easier and the instructional process more productive. In addition to these skills, the teacher must demonstrate an ability to motivate adults to do their job better by reducing stress and creating a positive work climate. The following qualities will enhance the ability of the teacher to be a good supervisor; tact (able to get a person to do tasks willingly); fairness (has an open mind and is willing to listen, sees that regulations are followed, acknowledges and gives credit for productive ideas, praises a job well done, doesn't expect others to do what s/he wouldn't do); thoroughness (makes certain the job is completed and the instructional or other objectives are met); common sense (gets the facts, thinks about the impact of possible decisions, and then acts); and concern (gives attention to the needs of the paraprofessionals, listens to their ideas, and provides the information the paraprofessionals need to perform their assigned tasks).

# A PERFORMANCE/SKILLS SURVEY FOR TEACHER-MANAGERS

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Directions:

1. Circle the number to the right of each item which best describes the way you work as a classroom manager. The way you perform your duties may be affected by several factors, including your own attitudes, the rules and regulations of the school district, the needs of the students, and the personnel assigned to work with you. THEREFORE, keep the requirements of your job in mind as you complete this inventory.

2. This is NOT a test! There are no right or wrong answers. This inventory should be used as a tool to start you thinking about your strengths and weaknesses as a planner, manager, communicator and evaluator, and to help you determine those areas where training and changes are needed.

3. Save this survey; it will be used later in the program as a data source for another instrument.

As a classroom/program manager, to what extent do you:

| | not at all | | occasionally | | regularly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. discuss the goals and objectives for each student with paraprofessional and other support personnel? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. plan and revise weekly schedules and job assignments for paraprofessionals? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. make work assignments and delegate responsibilities based on skills demonstrated by the paraprofessional? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. describe and demonstrate the instructional methods, strategies and materials you want the paraprofessional to use to achieve the goals established for individual students? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. describe and demonstrate the specific behavior management or disciplinary methods you have selected and want the paraprofessional to use? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. describe the classroom organization and rules for students and adults to follow in the classroom? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

As a classroom/program manager, to what extent do you:

| | not at all | | occasionally | | regularly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. involve paraprofessional or other support staff affected by a group or personal problem in making decisions about how to solve the problem? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. involve paraprofessional or other support staff in determining the causes of job related problems? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. consider alternative solutions to problems? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. make plans to carry out the solution(s)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. check to see if the solution is working? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

As a classroom/program manager, to what extent do you:

| | not at all | | occasionally | | regularly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. encourage paraprofessionals and support personnel to exchange ideas with you about ways to improve the instructional team? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. learn about skills or talents paraprofessionals may have that will enhance the instructional process? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. create a climate of trust and open communication? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | not at all | | occasionally | | regularly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. demonstrate high standards of professional and ethical conduct (honesty, dependability, loyalty, courtesy, maintain confidentiality, and respect for student/parent rights) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. treat the paraprofessional as a partner and member of the instructional team? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

As a classroom/program manager, to what extent do you:

| | not at all | | occasionally | | regularly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. make sure that the paraprofessional is aware of the criteria you or another evaluator are using to assess his/her performance? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. meet at regularly scheduled times to discuss how the paraprofessional is doing? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. give sincere praise when earned? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. back up an evaluation of on-the-job performance with specific examples of behavior? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

As a classroom/program manager, to what extent do you:

| | not at all | | occasionally | | regularly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. clearly communicate what is expected of the paraprofessional? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. clearly explain and model a new skill? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. provide opportunities for the paraprofessional to practice a new skill under your direct supervision? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. help the paraprofessional to learn from his/her mistakes and provide constructive feedback? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# THE TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL: AN INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM

## Instructional Objectives

The teacher will be able to:

- describe the changing roles and responsibilities of teachers,
- describe the role of the paraprofessional in the classroom,
- differentiate between the duties and responsibilities of the teacher and paraprofessional.

## Overview

Role definitions for both teachers and paraprofessionals are in a state of transition. The purpose of this unit is to provide the teacher-trainees with an understanding of the unique and important distinctions between the roles of the teacher and paraprofessional. The subsequent units will provide the trainees with the skills and knowledge they need to supervise and work with the paraprofessional in order to form a partnership that will benefit the students in the classsroom.

## Materials and Equipment

To conduct the activities in this unit you will need:

1. An overhead projector and/or a chalkboard
2. TRANSPARENCY R&R 1 "The Changing Roles of Teachers"
3. TRANSPARENCY R&R 2 "Definition of the Term Paraprofessional"
4. TRANSPARENCY R&R 3 "Non-Instructional Duties of Paraprofessionals"
5. TRANSPARENCY R&R 4 "Instructional Duties of Paraprofessionals"
6. HANDOUT R&R 1 "The Changing Roles of Teachers, Definition of the Term Paraprofessional; and Instructional and Non-Instructional Duties for Paraprofessionals"
7. A slide-tape projector (optional)
8. The Slide-Tape (optional) "Roles and Responsibilities of a Paraprofessional" (See next page for information about how to order the AV material.) and
9. Job descriptions for paraprofessionals developed by your local school district.

## Pre-Session Procedures

1. Obtain a copy of the job description(s) for paraprofessionals developed by your local school district. Compare them with the definitions and descriptions in this unit.

2. Review the trainer material including the content in the handouts and develop a lecture describing a) the changing roles of teachers, b) the contributions paraprofessionals make to the instructional process, and c) the differences between the roles and responsibilities of teachers and paraprofessionals.

3. Reproduce the Transparencies and Handouts. If you do not have an overhead projector you may want to write some of the items on the chalkboard.

4. If you use the slide-tape, preview it and set up the projector and tape recorder.*

Training Procedures

ACTIVITY #1 Prior to delivering the lecture and/or showing the slide-tape ask the trainees to brainstorm a definition of the word paraprofessional and a list of appropriate duties for paraprofessionals. (Record them on the chalkboard.)

ACTIVITY #2 Distribute the handouts and deliver the lecture using the transparencies and supplemental material, and

ACTIVITY #3 (optional) show the slide tape.

*The slide-tape "Roles and Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals" may be borrowed from the Kansas State Department of Education, Division of Special Education, 120 E. 10th Street, Topeka, Kansas 66612.

# THE TEACHER - PARAPROFESSIONAL: AN INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM

Clear distinctions between the role of the teacher and the paraprofessional must be made in order for the team to work together as an effective unit. Teachers who do not understand the role distinctions may feel "threatened" and misunderstandings may develop unnecessarily if lines of authority are not clearly drawn.

The term paraprofessional is in itself indicative of the role. The contribution the "para" professional makes is to work alongside of and assist the teacher in providing instruction and other services to students with handicapping conditions.

## Roles of Teachers

It is the teacher as the professional staff member in the class who has the ultimate responsbility for the education of the students in the class. Teachers are professionals and their skills reflect years of training and experience. Even when tasks and duties are delegated by the teacher and mutually decided upon by the team, it is the teacher who is responsible for diagnosing the needs of individual students, prescribing the instructional program and evaluating the impact of the program on student performance.

The development of new insights and ways to provide improved and expanded educational services for students with special needs has brought about significant changes in the roles and responsibilities of teachers. They are responsible for developing and implementing all phases of the instructional process including: 1) collecting and analyzing data in order to assess the developmental level of each student; 2) consulting with colleagues and participating in the preparation of Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each student; 3) developing the instructional objectives and programs for each student; 4) evaluating the effectiveness of the programs; and 5) involving parents in all aspects of their child's education.

## Roles of Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals have become integral members of the instructional team. Indeed, they have become technicians who might more aptly be described as "paraeducators" just as their counterparts in law and medicine are identified as paralegals and paramedics (Pickett, 1989).

They assist and enable the teacher to fulfill the functions of a classroom manager. This is accomplished by the paraprofessional performing both administrative and instructional duties that complement and support the activities of the teacher. Paraprofessionals are usually classified in three categories in the public schools: instructional assistants, non-instructional aides, and support or auxiliary personnel such as vocational training assistants/job coaches, social work assistants, occupational, physical, and speech therapy aides. (See Handouuts R&R 3 & 4 for a description of instructional duties performed by paraprofessionals.)

For the purpose of this training, we are using a definition of the term paraprofessional developed by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Services. A paraprofessional is an employee: 1) whose position is either instructional in nature or who provides other direct or indirect services to students and/or their parents; and 2) who works under the supervision of a teacher or another professional staff member who has the ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation, and evaluation of individual education programs and related services.

Contributions of Paraprofessionals

There are several ways paraprofessionals help to improve the quality of individual educational programs and instructional activities. Probably the most important contribution they make is to enable the teacher to provide individualized services tailored to meet the needs of all of the students in the class. Paraprofessionals enhance the quality of instruction and other activities that take place in the classroom in the following ways:

1. the educational program becomes more student oriented and flexibility within the classroom is increased;

2. tutorial services for individual students can be provided;

3. the student benefits from extra "eyes and ears" alert to individual needs and problems; and

4. the teacher has more time to:

   - study and assess the needs of each student;
   - confer with parents;
   - diagnose problems;
   - prepare and plan for individual instruction;
   - try a broader range of teaching techniques and strategies;
   - evaluate the progress of each student.

(Use Transparencies 5 and 6 as a method for comparing the roles and responsibilities of teachers and paraprofessionals in the instructional process.)

## CHANGING ROLES OF TEACHERS

**THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- **COLLECTING AND INTERPRETING DATA ABOUT STUDENT BEHAVIOR**
- **ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE LEVEL OF EACH STUDENT**
- **CONSULTING WITH COLLEAGUES AND PARTICIPATING IN THE PREPARATION OF INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEP)**
- **DETERMINING APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AND THE ENTIRE CLASS**
- **IMPLEMENTING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS ALONG WITH PARA-PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL**
- **EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS**
- **INVOLVING PARENTS IN ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION**

**AND**

- **COORDINATING AND SUPERVISING THE WORK OF PARAPROFESSIONALS AND OTHER SUPPORT STAFF**

## PARAPROFESSIONALS: A DEFINITION

**A Paraprofessional is an Employee**

1. **Whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers other direct services to students and/or their parents;**

2. **Who works under the supervision of a Professional Staff Member who is responsible for the overall conduct and management of the classroom including the design, implementation an evaluation of instructional programs and student progress.**

**Paraprofessionals Provide Services in the Following Programmatic Areas:**

- **Educational Programs**
- **Physical Therapy**
- **Occupational Therapy**
- **Speech Therapy**
- **Recreation Programs**
- **Early Intervention and Pre-school Programs**
- **Social Work/ Case Management**
- **Parent Training/Child Find Programs**
- **Vocational Training Programs and Job Coaching**

TRANSPARENCY: R&R 3

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES PERFORMED BY PARAPROFESSIONALS

- BUS DUTY (E.G. ASSIST DRIVER AND STUDENTS WITH ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT AND MONITOR PHYSICAL WELFARE OF STUDENTS).
- SUPERVISE PLAYGROUND AND LUNCHROOM PERIODS
- OPERATE AUDIO-VISUAL AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT
- RECORD ATTENDANCE, MAINTAIN RECORDS AND PERFORM OTHER CLERICAL TASKS
- ASSIST STUDENTS WITH PERSONAL AND HYGIENIC CARE
- PREPARE TRAINING AIDES: MAINTAIN SUPPLIES
- SET UP AND MAINTAIN SPECIAL CLASSROOM EQUIPMENT AND LEARNING CENTERS

TRANSPARENCY: R&R 4

INSTRUCTIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES PERFORMED BY PARAPROFESSIONALS

- ASSIST INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS IN PERFORMING ACTIVITIES INITIATED BY THE TEACHER
- ASSIST WITH SUPPLEMENTARY WORK FOR STUDENTS AND SUPERVISE INDEPENDENT STUDY
- REINFORCE LESSONS WITH SMALL GROUPS WHILE THE TEACHER WORKS WITH INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS
- ASSIST IN EDUCATIONAL DEMONSTRATIONS FOR THE CLASS OR SMALL GROUPS
- PROVIDE ASSISTANCE WITH INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAMMED MATERIALS
- ADMINISTER CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS (SPELLING TEST, ETC.)
- SCORE OBJECTIVE TESTS AND PAPERS AND KEEP APPROPRIATE RECORDS FOR TEACHERS
- ASSIST THE TEACHER IN OBSERVING, RECORDING AND CHARTING BEHAVIOR
- ASSIST THE TEACHER WITH CRISIS PROBLEMS AND DISCIPLINE
- PARTICIPATE AS AN ACTIVE TEAM MEMBER
- ASSIST WITH THE PREPARATION OF MATERIALS FOR USE IN SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS
- PRESENT ORAL AND WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

## CHANGING ROLES OF TEACHERS

They are responsible for:

-Observing and recording data about student behavior;

-Assessing the performance level of each student;

-Participating in the preparation of individual education plans (IEP);

-Developing instructional objectives and individualized programs for each student;

-Implementing instructional programs along with paraprofessional and other professional personnel;

-Evaluating the effectiveness of the program;

-Involving parents in all aspects of their child's education and;

-Coordinating and supervising the work of paraprofessional and other support staff.

## PARAPROFESSIONALS: A DEFINITION

A paraprofessional is an employee:

1) Whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers other direct services to students and/or their parents; and 2) who serves in a position for which a teacher or another professional has ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation, and evaluation of individualized education programs and related services.

They provide services in the following programmatic areas: educational programs, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, recreation programs, early intervention and pre-school programs, social work/case management, parent training/child find programs, and vocational training programs and job coaching.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES PERFORMED BY PARAPROFESSIONALS

-Bus duty (e.g. assisting driver and students with adaptive equipment and monitoring physical welfare of students);

-Accompanying students from the classroom to resource rooms and other program;

-Supervising playground and lunchroom;

-Operating audio-visual and office equipment;

-Recording attendance, maintaining records and other clerical tasks;

-Assisting students with personal and hygienic care;

-Preparing training materials and maintaining supplies;

-Setting up and maintaining special classrom equipment and learning centers.

INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES PERFORMED BY PARAPROFESSIONALS

The paraprofessional participates as an active team member by:

-Instructing individual students using instructional objectives and lessons developed by the teacher;

-Assisting with supplementary work for students and supervising independent study;

-Reinforcing lessons with small groups of students;

-Providing assistance with individualized program materials - written and oral;

-Administering classroom assessment instruments (spelling test, etc.); and scoring objective tests and written papers and keeping appropriate records for teachers;

-Assisting the teacher in observing, recording and charting behavior;

-Implementing behavioral management strategies - using the same emphasis and techniques as the teacher;

-Assisting the teacher with crisis problems and discipline;

-Assisting with the preparation of materials for use in specific instructional programs;

-Attending IEP meetings at the request of the teacher or administrative personnel

INTEGRATING THE PARAPROFESSIONAL INTO THE CLASSROOM:
SETTING GOALS & PLANNING

## Instructional Objectives

The teacher will be able to:

- describe the value and need for setting goals and planning for paraprofessionals and other support personnel,
- use a system of task analysis to develop appropriate assignments and duties for the paraprofessional, and
- develop a plan for integrating the paraprofessional into the instructional process and other classroom activities.

## Overview

The goals for the instructional team and the duties to be performed by the teacher and the paraprofessional must be based on the objectives designed to meet the identified needs of students in the class. The classroom manager must, therefore, look at and analyze the tasks that must be performed in order to achieve various programmatic goals. The activities in this unit will prepare the teachers to develop appropriate assignments and provide them with guidelines and strategies for integrating the paraprofessional into all phases of the instructional process and administrative procedures.

## Materials and Equipment

To conduct the activities in this unit you will need:

1. An overhead projector and/or a chalkboard
2. TRANSPARENCY-SG/P-1 "Components of Task Analysis"
3. TRANSPARENCY-SG/P-2 "Task Analysis Worksheet"
4. HANDOUT-SG/P-1 "NCTL Task Analysis Chart"
5. HANDOUT-SG/P-2 "Example of a Completed Task Analysis Chart"
6. HANDOUT-SG/P-3 "Task Analysis Worksheet"

## Pre-Session Procedures

1. Review the trainer material and develop a lecture describing: a) the value of establishing job functions and assignments based on identified goals and needs, and b) the need to develop a systematic plan to integrate the paraprofessional into all phases of the instructional process and administrative activities based on the performance level of the paraprofessional.

2. Review all the information about the Task Analysis Process including the trainer material, the "NCTL Task Analysis Chart", the example of a Completed Task Analysis Chart, and the "Task Analysis

Worksheet". Develop a brief lecture to introduce the process using the supplemental material as an outline. (Please note while establishing criteria is part of the process, evaluation will be more fully addressed in a later unit.)

3. Reproduce the TRANSPARENCIES (SG/P 1 and 2), or if you do not have an overhead projector write the items contained in the TRANSPARENCIES on the chalkboard.

4. Duplicate the HANDOUTS (SG/P 1 through 3).

Teaching Procedures

ACTIVITY #1 Deliver the lecture on the value of developing a systematic plan for integrating the paraprofessional into the classroom.

ACTIVITY #2 Ask the participants to brainstorm a list of specific information they need to know about the paraprofessional in order to develop the plan (Record them on the chalkboard.)

ACTIVITY #3 Distribute the "NCTL Task Analysis Chart" to the trainees and ask them to follow it as you deliver the lecture on the Task Analysis Procedures.

ACTIVITY #4 Distribute the "Example of a Completed Task Analysis Chart". Review the content with the trainees. Discuss the items in the "How" section under Conditions and ask the trainees to determine: a) which tasks the teacher should be responsible for, and b) which tasks could be performed by either the teacher or paraprofessional.

ACTIVITY #5 Divide the trainees into small groups of 5 or 6. Ask them to 1) discuss and develop a brief list of administrative and programmatic functions that need to be undertaken in order to establish a well managed classroom and meet individual student needs, and 2) based on this discussion, to select a specific job function to be task analyzed in order to determine strategies for performing the task, criteria for evaluating the performance, the skills required to perform the task and to decide whether the teacher and/or the paraprofessional should perform the task.

ACTIVITY #6 Distribute copies of the "Task Analysis Worksheet" and ask the group to work together to complete a task analysis of the activity they selected. (The results of the Task Analysis will be used again in the unit on evaluating and coaching).

ACTIVITY #7 Assemble the group and ask them: 1) to report on the results of their efforts, and 2) discuss how they can use this system to develop a plan to integrate the paraprofessional into the classroom.

# SETTING GOALS AND PLANNING

## Setting Goals

When Alice in Wonderland met the Cheshire Cat and asked it which road to take, the cat responded by asking where she wanted to go. Alice's response was that it really didn't matter, to which the cat replied, that in that case it really didn't matter which road she took. This is an important lesson for all supervisory personnel and managers, because if they do not know where they want to go then they cannot determine what human resources, skills, equipment, and other assistance are needed to arrive at the destination.

Teachers understand and appreciate the value of setting long range goals and short term objectives for students as the basis for developing individualized education programs. However, because teachers have not been trained to plan for another adult in the classroom, they rarely take the time to develop guidelines and strategies for integrating paraprofessionals into the program and administrative activities in the classroom.

Without goals and a plan to achieve the goals, chaos and confusion may result rather than an orderly process that will enable the instructional team to function effectively and help each student reach the goals that have been established for him/her.

## Overview of Task Analysis

There are several methods a teacher can use to develop goals and plan the specific duties and assignments for the instructional team. We have selected the technique of Task Analysis,* because many teachers are already familiar with the concept and use it to develop strategies for teaching various skills in the classroom. Using the technique will provide the trainees with an opportunity to develop an approach to integrating the paraprofessional into the classroom and at the same time to heighten an awareness of their own duties as a program manager and supervisor.

## Information the Teacher Needs to Know About Paraprofessionals

Prior to initiating the Task Analysis, it is important for the teacher to determine the contributions the paraprofessional will be able to make to the educational process. By learning about the educational background, previous work and volunteer experience, and talents the paraprofessional brings to the job, the teacher will be able to tailor assignments to the level of skills demonstrated by the paraprofessional.

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* The system of Task Analysis we are using was developed by Vivian C. Jackson for the New Careers Training Laboratory, (NCTL), Center for Advanced Study in Education, The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York.

## Establishing Goals

To begin the Task Analysis process the analyst divides the goals of the classroom into operational/programmatic functions. This is done by determining the most important responsibilities that confront the instructional team. They include, but are not limited to: assessing the developmental and functioning levels of individual students, developing behavioral objectives for each student, planning and implementing instructional programs, evaluating the effectiveness of the program, developing an efficient classroom structure, record keeping, and more.

## Planning

To achieve the identified goals requires careful planning that takes into account many variables such as the educational needs of the students, the human resources available to assist the teacher, physical resources and classroom facilities, and other factors that affect the instructional process.

## Identifying Job Functions and Analyzing the Tasks

The basic components of every job are the tasks the team must perform to accomplish the stated goals. The heart of the Task Analysis with regard to the classroom manager is for the manager to look at the work that needs to be done in the classroom and to then determine which member(s) of the team should/can perform the task. As the areas are identified they are divided into several parts including:

- ACTIVITIES: the specific work the team must perform to achieve the goals;
- THE CONDITIONS: the circumstances under which a task is to be performed - specifically where and how the activity takes place (the methods to be used) and who can/should perform a task, and evaluate the work;
- CRITERIA: the standards by which the quality of the work will be evaluated (the determination of how well the activities are being performed);
- PRIMARY SKILLS: the essential knowledge base and technical skills needed to perform a specific activity at a minimally satisfactory level;
- SECONDARY SKILLS: additional levels of knowledge and skills which will prove helpful in performing the task (skills that enhance or improve the worker's primary skills);
- DESIRABLE SKILLS: more complex skills which cannot necessarily be acquired through routine training but are reflected in the worker's performance (e.g. good judgement, efficiency, understanding, patience, dependability, creativity.)

## Organizing and Scheduling

Once the classroom manager has identified the goals, the activities that need to be performed to achieve them, and determined where, who and how the work will be performed, it is time to develop the plans for integrating the paraprofessional into the classroom structure. How the teacher does this will depend on the overall supervisory and instructional style of the teacher.

In general the plan will include: 1) a general or weekly classroom schedule for individual and group activities; 2) a list of administrative tasks and daily lesson plans outlining the duties the teacher and/or paraprofessional will be responsible for; and 3) the material or other resources needed to carry out the assigned task. Because there are a multitude of ways lesson plans are developed and implemented it is important for the paraprofessional to understand the elements that go into planning a lesson and the instructional strategies the teacher prefers to use. In a positive classroom atmosphere, the team may well plan the lessons together and thereby insure the development of a strong team effort.

TRANSPARENCY SG/P-1

# TASK ANALYSIS

AN APPROACH TO INTEGRATING THE PARAPROFESSIONAL INTO THE CLASSROOM BY:

1. LOOKING AT JOB FUNCTIONS FOR:

   TEACHERS
   PARAPROFESSIONALS
   SUPPORT PERSONNEL

2. IDENTIFYING TASKS AND ANALYZING EACH TASK TO DETERMINE:

| | |
|---|---|
| ACTIVITIES: | THE SPECIFIC WORK THE INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBERS MUST PERFORM TO ACHIEVE IDENTIFIED GOALS |
| CONDITIONS: | THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE TASK IS TO BE PERFORMED - SPECIFICALLY WHERE AND HOW (METHODOLOGY) THE ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE AND WHO PERFORMS THEM |
| CRITERIA: | THE STANDARDS BY WHICH THE QUALITY OF THE WORK WILL BE EVALUATED - DETERMINATION OF HOW WELL THE ACTIVITIES ARE BEING PERFORMED |
| PRIMARY SKILLS: | THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS NEEDED TO PERFORM THE ACTIVITY |
| SECONDARY SKILLS: | ADDITIONAL SKILLS THAT WILL ENHANCE AND IMPROVE THE WORKER'S PRIMARY SKILLS |
| DESIRABLE SKILLS: | MORE COMPLEX SKILLS WHICH CANNOT NECESSARILY BE ACQUIRED THROUGH TRAINING BUT ARE REFLECTED IN THE WORKERS PERFORMANCE (E.G. GOOD JUDGEMENT, PATIENCE, DEPENDABILITY, CREATIVITY) |

TRANSPARENCY SG/P -2

# TASK ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

| ACTIVITY | CONDITIONS | CRITERIA | SKILLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| | WHERE: | WHO: | PRIMARY |
| | WHO: | | SECONDARY |
| | HOW: | | DESIRED |

HANDOUT SG/P -1

NCTL TASK ANALYSIS CHART

| ACTIVITY | CONDITIONS | CRITERIA | PRIMARY SKILLS | SECONDARY SKILLS | DESIRABLE SKILLS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| What tasks must be done in order to provide adequate services? | Where are the done?<br>How are they done?<br>What materials, equipment are required?<br>Who performs the task(s), supervises the work, evaluates the performance? | What does an employee do that can be observed and measured objectively to find out how well the task is performed? | What are the basic skills needed to perform each task? | Which skills or knowledge will help the employee perform the task better? | What life and work experience is needed? Which discretionary skills will enhance the employee's performance? What personal qualities are desirable? |

EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED TASK ANALYSIS CHART
(DETERMINING THE DUTIES OF TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL)

| ACTIVITY | CONDITIONS | CRITERIA | SKILLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Conducting a lesson designed to meet the needs of a specific student | Where: Classroom<br><br>Who: Teacher and/or Paraprofessional<br><br>How:<br><br>1. Develop teaching objectives<br><br>2. Develop/plan a lesson which is at an appropriate level for the student<br><br>3. Prepare materials in advance<br><br>4. Provide an appropriate setting for the lesson<br><br>5. Teach the lesson based on the plan<br><br>6. Observe and record data about student progress<br><br>7. Return material to proper storage place | Who: Teacher assesses the performance of the paraprofessional<br><br>Does the paraprofessional:<br><br>1. Provide good/clear directions<br><br>2. State/demonstrate what behavior is expected<br><br>3. Teach sequentially<br><br>4. Use appropriate prompts/ stimulates responses<br><br>5. Measure performance against objectives established by the teacher<br><br>6. Use appropriate re-enforcers<br><br>7. Provide reinforcement in a timely consistent manner<br><br>8. Stay on task<br><br>9. Use materials effectively | Primary (for paraprofessionals)<br>- Speak clearly and well<br>- Read and write<br>- Know instructional material and how to use it<br><br>Secondary<br>- Knowledge of objective observation skills<br><br>- Knowledge of how to use appropriate re-enforcers<br><br>- Knowledge of various prompts (cueing, modeling, fading, etc.)<br><br>- Use of various teaching techniques<br><br>Desired<br>- Patience and flexibility<br><br>- Relates well to students<br><br>- Pleasant and enthusiastic<br><br>- Exercises good judgment with regard to students' needs<br><br>- Creative and imaginative |

HANDOUT: SG/P -3

TASK ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

| ACTIVITY | CONDITIONS | CRITERIA | SKILLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Where: | Who: | Primary |
| | Who: | | Secondary |
| | How: | | Desired |

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# DIRECTING AND DELEGATING

## Instructional Objectives

The teacher will be able to:

- describe the differences between assigning tasks and delegating work,
- identify and improve his/her method of directing and monitoring the work of paraprofessionals and other support staff, and
- determine what responsibilities can be appropriately delegated to paraprofessionals.

## Overview

The job of the classroom manager is to get work done with and through other people. This may require the classroom teacher to: 1) schedule and coordinate the activities of other professional personnel working with students in the classroom, 2) assign tasks to paraprofessionals, 3) delegate work to appropriate members of the educational team, and 4) to meld the efforts of all of these people into an effective educational strategy for the students in the classroom. The content and exercises in this unit build on the activities in the previous unit and are designed to provide the teachers with the skills they need to direct, coordinate, and delegate work assignments.

## Materials and Equipment

To conduct the activities in this unit you will need:

1. An overhead projector and/or a chalkboard
2. TRANSPARENCY DD 1 Supervision: Guidelines for Directing and Delegating
3. HANDOUT/EXERCISE DD 1 "To Delegate or Not To Delegate"

## Pre-Session Procedures

1. Review the trainer materials and prepare a lecture on directing and delegating work in the classroom. Stress the distinctions between delegating a task and sharing responsibility for a task. Refer to items developed through the Task Analysis procedures from the previous unit and use them to establish the duties of the teacher with regard to directing and delegating. Use TRANSPARENCY DD 1 as an outline for the lecture.

2. Reproduce the TRANSPARENCY DD 1, or if you do not have an overhead projector write the items contained in the TRANSPARENCY on the chalkboard.

3. Duplicate copies of the HANDOUT/EXERCISE DD 1 TO DELEGATE OR NOT TO DELEGATE.

Teaching Procedures

ACTIVITY #1 Deliver the lecture

ACTIVITY #2 Ask the trainees to discuss their fears and attitudes about delegating and sharing responsibility for certain activities with paraprofessionals.

ACTIVITY #3 Distribute the HANDOUT/EXERCISE "To Delegate or Not to Delegate". Ask the participants to complete the exercise individually. Then lead a discussion asking each person to share their reasons for deciding which tasks could/should be delegated to a paraprofessional.

# DIRECTING AND DELEGATING

Of all the activities that comprise the process of management, directing and delegating are near the top of the list of tasks a teacher is most likely to resist. For some teachers directing means "being a boss" or "giving orders." Others resist the idea of delegating because they fear losing control over the classroom, or because they truly believe that it is inappropriate to delegate responsibility for any part of the instructional process. It is not surprising that teachers are not comfortable directing or delegating. Traditionally the public (consumers), policy makers, teacher educators, and teachers themselves have not viewed these activities as one of the teacher's responsibilities. The changing and expanding roles of teachers make it important for the teacher to acquire these skills.

## Assigning Tasks

It is important for the teacher to understand the differences between assigning and delegating tasks to avoid the pitfalls of practicing de facto delegation or assigning inappropriate tasks to the paraprofessional. In the previous unit a system of task analysis was presented as a method to determine what activities have to be performed, how they should be performed, and who should perform them to achieve the programmatic and administrative goals in the classroom. Assigning tasks to the paraprofessional and giving accurate and complete directions for how the work is to be performed is the next step in the process.

## Directing

Directions may be given orally, in writing, by demonstrating or a combination of all three. The key to giving effective directions is: 1) to make sure that the paraprofessional is ready to learn a new skill, and 2) comprehends what is expected of her or him. Therefore, the teacher must take care to use clear precise terms and to determine whether or not the paraprofessional understands what is expected. This may be accomplished by: a) asking the paraprofessional to model the skills while the teacher observes, and b) encouraging the paraprofessional to ask questions and share concerns about the nature of the assignment.

To be sure that assigned tasks are carried out well, it is necessary for the teacher to select and give appropriate information to the paraprofessional, including what has to be done and how it is to be done. To perform the task effectively the paraprofessional will need to know:

1. WHY it is necessary to perform this particular task
2. WHAT is needed to do the job. (equipment, material)
3. WHO will be doing the job. (the paraprofessional, the teacher and paraprofessional, and/or others)
4. WHERE will the task be done
5. WHEN will the task begin and end
6. HOW will the task be performed (teaching methods, reenforcers, and other techniques)

7. HOW will the progress of the students be monitored, and
8. HOW will the performance of the paraprofessional be monitored.

Delegating

Sometimes the teacher will find it beneficial to delegate a task. We have established that the teacher has the overall responsibility for getting the teaching/learning job accomplished successfully. It is also true that the teacher may not be able to accomplish everything the job entails. Delegation means giving others the responsibility for completing the task and using their own judgment as to whether the task has been performed properly. The delegator is still responsible for the administration, over sight and conduct of the task.

It is critical that a decision to delegate a responsibility be made consciously and planned for. Otherwise de facto or inappropriate delegation are likely to occur. Both are common problems in the classroom and often lead to paraprofessional or other support personnel performing tasks that are unfair to them and to the students. An example, of an inappropriate assignment is asking a paraprofessional to deal with a difficult student almost exclusively so the teacher can spend his/her time with the students who can "really learn and benefit from his/her skills." De facto delegation happens when a teacher does not adequately explain what is expected of the paraprofessional and the paraprofessional carves out his/her own place in the classroom by making decisions about what to do and how to do it.

Some teachers may not feel comfortable delegating because they really don't understand how to determine what to delegate, or the benefits of delegating. In addition, as noted previously, teachers have for a variety of reasons real concerns about delegating any part of the instructional process. These blocks can and should be overcome because effective, appropriate delegation can assure:

1. that the paraprofessional's existing skills will be used well,
2. that motivation will be improved,
3. that the paraprofessional's abilities will be recognized, and most importantly,
4. that the teacher's time will be used more efficiently to the benefit of the students.

## SUPERVISION

**GIVING DIRECTIONS:**

**DO YOU KNOW WHAT FUNCTIONS YOU EXPECT THE PARA-PROFESSIONAL TO PERFORM IN THE CLASSROOM?**

**DO YOU MEET REGULARLY WITH THE PARAPROFESSIONAL TO PROVIDE ON THE JOB COACHING?**

**WHEN YOU ASSIGN A SPECIFIC TASK TO THE PARAPROFESSIONAL, DO YOU DESCRIBE:**

- **WHAT IS TO BE DONE**
- **WHY IT NEEDS TO BE DONE**
- **THE MATERIALS THAT WILL BE NEEDED**
- **HOW YOU WANT IT TO BE DONE**

**DELEGATING:**

**HAVE YOU ASKED YOURSELF IF THE PARAPROFESSIONAL IS READY TO TAKE ON THE RESPONSIBILITY?**

**ARE YOU PREPARED TO GIVE THE PARAPROFESSIONAL THE NECESSARY AUTHORITY TO PERFORM THE TASK?**

**HAVE YOU DETERMINED HOW YOU WILL MONITOR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PARAPROFESSIONAL?**

**DO YOU AVOID <u>DE FACTO</u> DELEGATION?**

# TO DELEGATE OR NOT TO DELEGATE

Directions: The following are representative of some (but not all) of the programmatic and administrative activities that a teacher is responsible for. Place a D after the ones you feel can appropriately be delegated to a paraprofessional. (For the purpose of this activity, do not make your decision on whether or not the task can be shared with a particular paraprofessional.) Be prepared to share and discuss your reasons for selecting the individual tasks with the other members of the groups.

| TASK | DELEGATE |
|---|---|
| 1. Diagnosing learning problems and evaluating functioning levels. | |
| 2. Developing behavior management strategies for individual students. | |
| 3. Implementing behavior management objectives. | |
| 4. Determining instructional objectives. | |
| 5. Task analyzing instructional objectives. | |
| 6. Selecting instructional material. | |
| 7. Demonstrating the use of materials or equipment. | |
| 8. Planning daily and weekly schedules. | |
| 9. Assessing the effectiveness of instructional techniques or methods. | |
| 10. Reviewing lessons and reenforcing learning with small groups. | |
| 11. Redirecting off task behavior of individual students. | |
| 12. Assessing individual student progress. | |
| 13. Administering standardized tests. | |
| 14. Scoring objective tests and keeping appropriate records. | |
| 15. Reporting to and meeting with parents regarding the progress of their children. | |

| TASK | DELEGATE |
|---|---|
| 16. Teaching new concepts to small groups, individual students or entire class. | |
| 17. Observing, recording and charting behaviors. | |
| 18. Evaluating data on student performance. | |
| 19. Arranging learning centers and preparing bulletin boards. | |
| 20. Developing materials for use in specific instructional programs. | |
| 21. Supervising students in community placement/work assignments. | |
| 22. Supervising students who are working independently. | |
| 23. Inventorying and ordering supplies. | |
| 24. Serving as a liaison between the school and community. | |
| 25. Scheduling and coordinating the work of volunteer personnel/peer tutors, etc. | |
| 26. Serving as a resource to teachers in regular education classes. | |
| 27. Filing student records. | |
| 28. Keeping attendance records. | |
| 29. Insuring that adaptive equipment and instructional materials are maintained in good working order. | |

## COMMUNICATION AND TEAM BUILDING

### Instructional Objectives

The teacher will be able to:

- describe four areas that are important components of interpersonal skill development;
- identify information the teacher and paraprofessional need to know about each other in order to develop a team approach in the classroom.

### Overview

One of the most important keys to successful integration of paraprofessionals into the instructional team is effective communication. Communication between people is not always easy and cooperative efforts do not develop automatically. For teachers to be able to supervise and work well with paraprofessionals and other support personnel they need to enhance their ability to listen and to share expectations, feelings, and ideas through positive verbal and non-verbal communication skills. The activities in this unit are divided into two parts. In the first section, the activities and content are general and will provide the trainees with increased self-awareness about their individual strengths and weaknesses as communicators. The material in the second section will provide the trainees with information that will enable them to establish and maintain effective instructional teams. (A unit on developing interpersonal problem solving skills follows this one and you may want to meld the activities in the two units into one.)

### Materials and Equipment

To conduct the activities in this unit you will need:

1. An overhead projector and/or a chalkboard
2. TRANSPARENCY C/TB-1 "Listening Problems and Listening Aids"
3. TRANSPARECNY C/TB-2 "Teacher Characteristics Paraprofessionals Need to Know"
4. HANDOUT C/TB 1 "Listening Skills"
5. HANDOUT C/TB-2 "A Look at Positive Behavior
6. HANDOUT C/TB-3 "Strategies for Clear Communication Between the Teacher-Paraprofessional"

### Pre-Session Procedures

1. Review the trainer materials and prepare a two-part lecture. The first part should stress general interpersonal and communication skills and the second section should address characteristics and information the teacher and paraprofessional need to know about each other to develop and maintain an effective team. Use the items on TRANSPARENCIES C/TB 1-2-3 and HANDOUT C/TB-2 as an outline.

2. Reproduce the transparencies, or if you do not have an overhead projector write the items contained in the transparencies on the chalkboard.

3. Duplicate the HANDOUTS.

Teaching Procedures

(There are more suggested activities in this unit then you will have time to use during the training. You should deliver the lectures and then select the activities that you feel will best meet the training needs of the group.)

Activity #1 Give the lecture on general interpersonal and communication skills

Activity #2 Ask individual trainees to describe a personal experience they have had that was difficult for them to deal with in a positive/ assertive way (e.g.: an argument with another person about an issue both people felt strongly about, making a point clearly and concisely in a large group, dealing with a contractor/mechanic who did slipshod work or did not live up to the terms of a contract.) Ask them to describe 1) their physical (non-verbal reactions), 2) their verbal responses - were they passive, aggressive, positive/assertive, and 3) how they would have preferred to respond.

Activity #3 Give the second half of the lecture on characteristics and idiosyncracies teachers and paraprofessionals need to know about each other. Ask the trainees to discuss the items you present and to suggest other information they feel is important for paraprofessionals to know about themselves in order to develop and maintain a strong effective team.

# COMMUNICATION AND TEAM BUILDING

## Interpersonal/Communication Skills

We convey ideas and attitudes to others using oral language, written language, and body language - this involves listening, talking, and watching. In order to communicate effectively with others it is important for all of us to develop and maintain skills in four areas. The four areas include: a) Attending Behavior- the skill that allows a person to be comfortable and relaxed with others, to maintain eye contact and to follow the comments of other people; b) Active Listening- the skill that allows one to hear and accurately understand both the feelings and ideas others are expressing without interpreting what we hear based on personal bias or mood; c) Expressing Feelings - the skill that enables a person to express emotions clearly and share them easily and positively with others; and d) Feedback the skill that allows a person to give descriptive, non-judgmental and specific reactions to others.

## Listening Problems

Listening is active work that requires the use of several techniques in order to eliminate problems that can deter effective communication. Some of the most common problems that interfere with efficient receptive listening are: short attention spans that make it very easy to become "mentally derailed" while listening to someone only two feet away, environmental/physical factors that can affect listening such as uncomfortable seats, noise, poor lighting and extreme temperatures, bias, personal prejudice, preconceived attitudes toward issues or speakers, or changing moods. (See HANDOUT C/TB 1 for additional information.)

## Communication Skills

Appropriate positive communication skills are critical and enable the classroom manager to relate more effectively to all of the people they come into contact with, including principals, parents, paraprofessionals, volunteers, and other colleagues.

Many of us experience unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships and frequently place the responsibility for these failures on others. There are, however, a multitude of ways we interfere with our own ability to interact effectively. Positive communication training is one approach to helping us deal with the problems we create for ourselves.

A basic assumption of positive communication training is that every individual is entitled to certain human rights. Among these rights are dignity, respect, and courtesy. The information in this unit is designed to provide the trainees with positive communication skills that will enable them to communicate honestly and freely with their co-workers, demonstrate respect for the feelings of others, and maintain respect for themselves. To do this the trainees will examine agressive, passive and assertive behaviors and the effect they have on individual and group/team relationships.

Non-Assertive (Passive)

Acting non-assertively is an ineffective way of communicating. Persons who are generally non-assertive have difficulty expressing opinions, beliefs, and feelings. They do not stand up for their legitimate rights and may feel as though they are being taken advantage of by others. Individuals who do not express their real thoughts and feelings withhold valuable information from others, preventing change as well as hindering the growth of any relationship.

Aggressive Behavior

Acting aggressively is another ineffective way of communicating. A person who responds aggressively violates the rights of others and may think the only way to get a point across is to yell, be sarcastic, or humilate the other person. Many people confuse assertion and aggression. It is important to recognize the differences and learn to be assertive rather than aggressive. Both assertion and aggression involve standing up for one's rights. It is crucial to note, however, that the aggressive person violates the rights of others, while the assertive person does not.

Positive/Assertive Communication

Assertive behavior allows an individual to stand up for his or her rights, and to express thoughts and feelings in an honest, straightforward fashion that shows respect for the other person.

Being assertive does not mean using the same style all the time. At times, the assertive individual may choose to be a clown, a scholar, or a playful kid. A person who has truly integrated assertive skills is able to choose how he or she will behave. These persons realize that they are not perfect and allow themselves the freedom to make mistakes.

# COMMUNICATION IN THE CLASSROOM *

## Need for a Common Vocabulary

A major problem that may impede the development of a strong team effort between the teacher and paraprofessional is a lack of a common base of reference and understanding. Teachers and other professional personnel tend to know and use the same educational jargon in connection with student performance, assessment techniques, program planning, and educational methods. All too often, however, the jargon becomes a form of shorthand and "educationalese" that allows professionals to communicate comfortably with each other while excluding others from participating in the educational process (e.g. parents, students, paraprofessionals).

## Non-Verbal Cues

In addition to the need for the instructional team to develop and strengthen verbal communication skills, they also need to develop a set of non-verbal cues that will enable them to reduce disruptions in all phases of the daily routine. By systematically using silent cues that do not require oral directions and responses to problems in the midst of instructional activities the team will be able to increase productivity, operate more efficiently in a crisis situation, and establish a positive approach to communication in the classroom.

## Developing the Instructional Team

The assumption is all too often made by professionals and non-professionals alike that one classroom is pretty much like any other. Nothing in fact is further from the truth. Schools and classrooms reflect the attitudes and styles of the principals and faculty, the special needs of the students, community values, and other cultural factors. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to provide an overview and orientation to the paraprofessional about the philosophy of the school and the personnel practices and procedures that all staff members are expected to follow. Of more direct consequences for the instructional team in the classroom is the need for the teacher to clarify for the paraprofessional the structure, the methods and the techniques s/he prefers to use in all phases of classroom and program management.

## How the Teacher Teaches

Teachers, like everyone else, are people with unique characteristics and ways of doing things. These characteristics are rarely given much thought by the teacher because they are such an integral part of the individual's teaching style; but for someone in a support role (in this case the paraprofessional) it is imperative that they know as much about these characteristics as possible.

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*This unit contains material adapted from: "Effective Utilization of Paraprofessionals by Professionals", developed by B. Heller and A.L. Pickett for Project RETOOL, a project of The Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, Virginia, 1982.

Every teacher has a style of his or her own. It may be one acquired from training, observing a role model or it may have been developed over a number of years of on-the-job experience. The style may be flexible, controlling, permissive and/or a combination of all of these. One person may be very structured and provide specific directions based on rules, procedures, and program and classroom structures developed by the teacher. Another person may ask the paraprofessional to share ideas and information and participate in the decision making/planning process. Still a third person may tend to be non-directive and prefer the paraprofessional to learn by observing what the teacher does and then to model the behavior. Without mutual awareness and understanding of these idiosyncracies the effectiveness of the team will be undermined. The following are descriptions of several items to which the teacher and paraprofessional must pay attention.

## Discipline Strategies

Discipline is for most teachers something that they hold very close and very dear to themselves. How they discipline and why they discipline is known many times only to them. Often it will require alot of tolerance and an understanding on the part of paraprofessionals to accept why the teacher disciplines one child in one way and another child, exhibiting almost the same behaviors, in quite another way. This also suggests how important it is for the teacher to explain to the paraprofessional why one student requires one disciplinary strategy and another does not. Discipline is a hard area to understand and agree upon, but if it is not understood it can lead to major problems and complications between the professional and paraprofessional.

## Instructional Techniques

Teachers need to make an effort to provide the paraprofessional with information about the techniques that are part of their teaching repertoire and reasons why they are used with particular groups or individuals in specific types of situations. By doing so, the teacher will enable the paraprofessional to more fully understand why a teaching procedure relates to the type of content or the particular type of grouping procedure that might be used in the classroom.

Teachers, almost like good mechanics, have their favorite tools. Why particular tools are favorites is known only to them, but the fact remains it is a favorite. Most teachers have an array of teaching procedures and techniques they like to use. It may be topic related, skill related, or concept related. Some teachers rely very heavily on the lecture, others will rely on self-instruction or auto-instruction, whereas others will rely on more incidental types of instruction such as learning centers and/or various types of project methods. Some will make use of media and others will utilize very little media; and some will involve students in planning their own educational programs as well as developing activities that will encourage students to practice the skills they learn in real life settings.

## Classroom Organization and Rules

Both structure and rules are integral components of the strategy of discipline and behavior management utilized in the classroom. Structure or a lack of it will very often determine the type of discipline that is experienced by the youngster in the classroom. For example, an open classroom setting places considerably more responsibillity on the student to determine the course of his/her behavior than a very structured or traditional classroom setting does.

The paraprofessional must be familiar with why a particular structure has been chosen by the teacher, and why and how it complements the instructional delivery and/or processes. Structure can be extremely important to some teachers and a failure on the part of the paraprofessional to recognize the value of such structure may cause major problems between the teacher and the paraprofessional. The paraprofessional must, like the students, learn to adjust to the structure within which the teacher is most comfortable. It is the responsibility of the teacher to help the paraprofessional understand and accept the structure he/she prefers.

The difficulty with rules is that some are formalized and written, others are informal and unwritten. It is the unwritten rule or unspoken rule that causes the most difficulty. Often times it is difficult for both the paraprofessional and students to comprehend fully what these rules are and how they are being applied. The teacher is generally the only one who knows what these unwritten rules are, and no one can be held responsible for communicating them to the paraprofessional other than the teacher.

Again, rules like classroom structure, are products of what the teacher deems to be appropriate for management of the instructional setting. Over time it is very likely that the paraprofessional will help to develop the rules for a given classroom, as well as support their enforcement. Whether or not paraprofessionals have been involved in developing the rules, it is their responsibility to see that they are enforced consistently and in accordance with the teacher's expectations.

By clarifying these components of the teaching process the teacher will "demythologize" teaching and establish a pattern of open communication that will lead to the development of a strong interpersonal relationship with the paraprofessional and other support personnel.

TRANSPARENCY: C/TB -1

## LISTENING PROBLEMS

ATTENTION

ENVIRONMENT

BIAS

## LISTENING AIDS

BE RECEPTIVE

CONCENTRATE

BECOME INVOLVED

ASK QUESTIONS

PREPARE TO LISTEN

# TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS AND PREFERENCES PARAPROFESSIONALS NEED TO KNOW

TEACHING TECHNIQUES AND METHODS

SUPERVISORY STYLE

DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

HOW TO USE TEACHING MATERIALS

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION AND RULES

# LISTENING SKILLS

The following are suggested ways to help eliminate listening problems:

1. Be Receptive. Try to prevent bias, prejudice or anger from distorting reception. Be willing to listen to new ideas, to pay attention, to look for the speaker's meaning, and to encourage the speaker by looking at him or her.

2. Concentrate. Try to blot out distractions, follow the thread of ideas, be alert for transitions from one thought to another.

3. Become Involved. Listen for personal pronouns, add information to what the speaker says, fill in gaps in his/her message, and maintain a mental running summary of the message.

4. Ask Questions. Clarify obscure points by repeating or paraphrasing the speaker's ideas and invite him/her to clarify missed meanings.

## A LOOK AT POSITIVE BEHAVIOR*

Positive, assertive behavior allows an individual to stand up for his or her legitimate rights. It involves the ability to express thoughts and feelings in an honest, straightforward fashion that shows respect for the other person.

Assertive individuals feel good about themselves and may exhibit the following characteristics:

- capable of expressing both positive and negative feelings and opinions
- have no need to rely on "little white lies"
- are open, willing to take risks and are responsible for their own behavior
- actively engage in meeting their needs without relying on other people, fate, or good luck.

VERBAL components of positive behavior include:

- expressing feelings and beliefs honestly and directly
- standing up for one's legitimate rights
- expressing respect and empathy for others
- use of "I" statements
- taking the initiative in interpersonal encounters
- offering alternatives

NONVERBAL components of positive behavior include:

- a firm and clear voice
- good eye contact
- appropriate facial expression
- relaxed and natural posture
- an air of confidence
- maintaining appropriate distance from the other person

Being assertive does not mean acting assertively ALL the time. At times, the assertive individual may choose to be a clown, a scholar, a playful kid, or a sensuous man or woman. A person who has truly integrated assertive skills is able to choose how he or she will behave. These persons realize that they are not perfect and allow themselves the freedom to make mistakes.

Acting assertively often involves taking risks and does not guarantee "Getting your own way." It does, however, help an individual feel good about him or herself and gives that person a sense of power and control over one's own world.

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*Adapted from: Catherine M. Steel, and Janice M. Hochman, "Assertion Skill Training: A Group Procedure for High School Women" American Personnel and Guidance Association, Washington, D.C. (undated)

# BASIC STRATEGIES FOR CLEAR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL

There are a number of elements that must be present in any situation to insure clear channels of communication. Some are commonplace and generally well known. Others are things we take for granted and if the members of the team are not careful and do not pay attention positive communication can be inhibited. For example:

- The attitudes and feelings of both the teacher and paraprofessional need to be known, respected, and understood. Teachers and paraprofessionals need to deal openly with their attitudes and feelings toward their roles and duties, their attitudes toward the students they work with, their attitudes toward instructional styles and management and their attitudes toward the value of the other person's contributions. When feelings are not shared and openly communicated the nature of the relationship will not grow and the team will not be effective.

- An understanding of the similarities and differences between the people involved in the team must be recognized and understood ranging from different points of view about educational strategies to different values, different cultural and religious heritages, different levels of education and experience and other factors that affect the working relationship.

- The teacher and paraprofessional should actively seek to develop and share a common vocabulary and system of nonverbal cues.

- The teacher must make sure that directions and expectations are clearly understood and that the paraprofessional is able to perform the assigned task prior to implementating the activity in the classroom.

- The paraprofessional must be willing to ask for clarification or assistance if the assignment is not understood.

- The teacher should determine what special interests, talents, and training the paraprofessional has that will complement and enhance his/her own skills and improve the delivery of instructional programs to students.

- The team must actively work to create a climate of cooperation, trust, respect, and loyalty by meeting regularly to discuss procedures and techniques that will establish and maintain open channels of communication.

# PROBLEM SOLVING

## Instructional Objectives

The teacher will be able to:

- describe the components of a five step method for defining and solving problems, and
- use these procedures, as part of a problem solving exercise, utilizing case studies based on typical problems encountered in the classroom by the instructional team.

## Overview

Developing a systematic way of dealing with problems in the classroom is critical. Solving problems when they occur means that they will not keep coming back to haunt the instructional team, and that they will be able to perform their jobs more effectively and efficiently. The trainees will learn to analyze and clarify problems, to brainstorm and to develop potential solutions based on identified needs, to choose a solution that both participants can live with, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the results.

## Materials and Equipment

To conduct the activities in this unit you will need:

1. An overhead projector and/or a chalkboard
2. TRANSPARENCY PS 1 -"Interpersonal Problem Solving"
3. Copies of Case Studies One and Two (PS 1A & 1B) for each participant
4. Copies of the Worksheet - "A Problem Solving Technique" (PS 2) for each participant
5. Copies of "Improving the Effectiveness of the Instructional Team" (PS 3)

## Pre-Session Procedures

1. Review the trainer materials; prepare a lecture on problem solving and decision making. Use TRANSPARENCY PS-1 as an outline.
2. Review the Case Studies and the Worksheet.
3. Prepare a TRANSPARENCY of PS 1 - "Interpersonal Problem Solving" or if you do not have an overhead projector outline the items on the TRANSPARENCY on the chalkboard.
4. Duplicate the HANDOUTS.

Teaching Procedures

ACTIVITY #1 Give the lecture on problem solving and decision making.

ACTIVITY #2 Case Studies*

a. Divide the participants into small groups of 6-10. Assign either Case Study One (PS 1A) or Case Study Two to each group. Distribute a copy of the assigned Case Study and the Worksheet (PS 2) to each member of the group.

b. Ask each group to designate a facilitator and a reporter/recorder.

c. Ask the trainees to read the assigned Case Study and review the Worksheet (allow 5-10 minutes for reading).

d. Determine if there are any questions about the worksheet, the steps to be followed in identifying and defining the problem, developing the goal, brainstorming alternative solutions, and choosing a solution.

e. At the end of 30-45 minutes, ask the small groups to reassemble as one group, and ask the reporters to share the results of the deliberations with the entire group.

f. Ask the entire group to discuss ways the process can be used by the instructional team to solve other types of problems.

ACTIVITY #3 Distribute copies of Improving the Effectiveness of the Instructional Team (PS 3) to each of the participants. Ask them to use it as a resource when they assess how to improve the performance of the instructional team in their classroom. Or use it to stimulate a discussion among the participants about the problems that confront them and their paraprofessional partner(s).

*The same Case Studies appear in A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS WORKING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES; CASE/NRC, The Graduate School and University Center, The City University of New York, New York, NY, 1989.

# PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING

## Introduction

The need for problem solving usually comes about when the teacher-manager becomes aware of discrepancies between the way things are actually happening in the classroom and the way s/he wants them to be. Problems in the classroom may be personal, technical, procedural, or related to the performance of either students or workers. They may range from a need to develop a piece of adaptive equipment for a student, to finding the time to train a paraprofessional to accurately observe and record data, to overcoming interpersonal problems that may develop among colleagues.

Many times, because of the pressure of other duties, teachers may ignore or postpone dealing with a problem that involves disagreements or conflicts with the adult(s) with whom they share the classroom. In all too many cases this can lead to a deepening of differences between the individuals. Not only does this have an impact on the morale and performance of the instructional team, it will probably affect the students as well. Whether it is called problem solving or decision making, it is necessary for the people involved to decide on a course of action. Finding mutually acceptable solutions is not always easy; and the responsibility for developing an effective process to alleviate a problem is likely to be left up to the teacher-paraprofessional team with little outside assistance or support.

Many problem solving exercises have been designed to improve the effectiveness of large interdisciplinary teams in education and other human services. The approach and case studies in this unit are designed to enhance the problem solving skills of the primary participants in the instructional team - the teacher and the paraprofessional.

## A Problem Solving Technique

The following are a series of simple steps that can be used by the teacher and paraprofessional to improve their ability to work together. While this approach to problem solving is based on two people working together to achieve concensus, there may in fact be times when it will be necessary for the teacher to make decisions about the work in the classroom that the paraprofessional may not always fully appreciate. However, by maintaining open lines of communication and mutual trust these problems should be few and far between.

## Step One: Identifying and Describing the Problem

A situation must be seen and clearly understood before it can be dealt with. It is not always easy to put a problem into words, but if it cannot be stated clearly it will be impossible to choose a course of action that will lead to a satisfactory solution. Each person should describe the problem in their own words and from their own point of view. This may be done by asking and answering these questions. What is the problem? What is wrong? Who is involved? Who is affected? How are they affected?

Step Two: Defining and Determining the Causes

It is not enough to identify the problem. It is essential to determine what causes the problem to exist and to persist? For example, the problem may be caused by "outside conditions" (contractual agreements, a lack of financial resources) that the team may have little ability to change, or it may have its roots in a lack of understanding of the distinction between the roles and duties of the teacher and paraprofessional. Other factors that may influence how a problem is defined may include differences in values and attitudes, age, work experience and education, cultural heritage, religious beliefs, and other personal traits. It is important that the real problem be separated from surface events and that areas of agreement and disagreement be identified.

Step Three: Deciding on a Goal and Identifying Alternative Solutions

Once the problem has been identified, then strategies can be developed. The primary question that needs to be asked and answered is "what do we want to achieve and how can we go about achieving it?" By working together and brainstorming a list of alternative solutions to the problem the team will have several options that will enable them to choose a course of action with which they can both live. It will also enable them to determine what additional information, physical or human resources, skills or knowledge they will need to carry out the solution and whether or not these resources are essential to achieving the goal.

Step Four: Selecting and Implementing a Course of Action

To make a decision about which course of action will be tried, the participants should decide which solution is most likely to get the desired results. Agreeing on a solution is not enough. The participants must try it out and test it to see if it will work. They must also give it enough time to see if the solution will work since behaviors and new skills cannot be changed over night?

Step Five: Evaluating the Results

Has the problem been resolved? Is there progress? If not - why not? Should we try another one of the alternatives? Should we ask for assistance from other sources? All of these are questions that will need to be addressed in order to assess the effectiveness of the process.

# STRATEGIES FOR INTER-PERSONAL PROBLEM SOLVING

I. **DEFINE**

- The problem as one person sees it
- The problem as the other person sees it
- Develop a common or shared definition

II. **ASK**

- Who is involved
- How are they involved
- Why does the problem exist
- What behaviors/attitudes of either person cause or contribute to the problem

III. **LIST**

- Areas of mutual agreement concerning problem
- Areas of disagreement

IV. **DEVELOP**

- A desired goal
- A solution(s) by brainstorming various ideas
- A list of resources, information, or assistance that will help you achieve the goal

V. **IMPLEMENT**

- The solution for a specific time period and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution
- If necessary select and implement another alternative

CASE STUDY ONE

Paraprofessional

I am Anne Newsome and I have been working as a paraprofessional for the past three months. I have a high school diploma and was married soon after I graduated. My two children are now in high school and I decided to get a job to supplement our income so that they can go to college. I really like working with young people and have been active in the PTA, was a Girl Scout Leader and taught in our local Sunday School. In fact, there was a boy in my class who had a learning disability and I liked the challenge of finding ways to make him feel as though he was part of the group.

When I took this job, I was briefed on district policy with regard to salary, fringe benefits, working hours, vacation, etc. In addition, I was told about the chain of command in the schools and was given some information about my role and responsibilities as a paraprofessional. I was told that Mr. Norton was the classroom teacher I had been assigned to work with and he would give me information about the specific tasks I would be expected to perform and the methods and strategies he would expect me to use to carry out the activities.

From the day I walked into the classroom we have never had a formal discussion about what he expects me to do; there is always some reason why we can't sit down and talk. We can never meet during his prep periods because he is always too busy doing lesson plans to talk to me about them. When I suggested we meet after school, he told me that this is impossible because he either has graduate classes to get to, or there are meetings at the Board; and then on one of the days when he was "free" I really had to get home to see about one of my kids who was sick.

I never know in advance what he wants me to do or how he wants it to be done. Just before he does something in the class, he will say "Anne, take this group and follow my plans." I have no real idea about what to do, except to try to do what I see him doing while I sit in the back of the room, watching him teach the lessons as he has asked me to do. When I am "teaching," he frequently breaks into what I am doing and corrects me right in front of the students. I don't have the guts to tell him how this makes me feel--so I save it up until I get home, and my family bears the brunt of all my frustrations.

But what has really worried me is what his correcting me in front of the students might be doing to my ability to work with them. Today it came to a head when he had to leave the room and I was left alone with the group. I asked of the students who is rather difficult to work with to join us for an activity. He responded by looking straight at me and saying, "No, I don't want to, and I don't have to because you don't know your job, and you can't tell me what to do." I wanted to cry and quit right then - but I didn't. Where do I go from here?

Teacher

I am Ken Norton, a vocational education teacher who has been assigned his first paraprofessional after teaching twelve years! This was done because several special education students were assigned to my class as part of the efforts to place them in what the district calls the least restrictive environment. I wish they had asked me whether I wanted someone or not because I am really a loner and have very strict rules about how things are to be done in my classroom. I've never worked with anyone before and I'm not really sure that I think it is worth the time to plan for another adult in the classroom, especially someone who is not trained to be a teacher much less to work with special education students.

At any rate, this woman walked into my room three months ago, just before school began, and said she was Anne Newsome, the paraprofessional assigned to me. I asked her if she had been told what her duties were and she informed me that they have been explained to her at a meeting at the district office. I wish they had told me what I could expect her to do because I have no idea what goes on in those "briefing" sessions nor have I seen a copy of a job description for aides. I asked her to sit in the back of the room for a while so she could get the hang of how I work. I told her that we'd get together later when I had some free time to talk to her.

During the first few days, I was never able to make the time to talk to her. I had to attend IEP meetings for the new students in my class and then develop individualized plans for them. It is a new responsibility and really takes a lot of time, more than I expected. I'm also taking a second Master's and I have to leave three days a week almost immediately after school, so just sitting down to talk is a problem. I wish there was time during the day to do this, but I'm just too busy with the kids, and the planning to take time out.

I finally decided that I'd let her re-enforce some of the lessons I had already taught the students. So I gave her my plans and told her to follow them. But she never did it exactly the way I wanted it to be done--she apparently thought it didn't make much difference how she did it as long as she felt comfortable. So what was I to do? I suggested she try it the way I had written it and not to use her own methods.

Three months have gone by and I'm still as harried as I was before, if not more so. And to make matters worse she seems to be having trouble controlling the kids in the classroom. It started when I had to leave for an emergency meeting and Anne was left in charge. I'm not sure what she did wrong but she is having real trouble dealing with one of the kids and it seems to have an impact on the way some of the other students are responding to her. I think my initial response to having another "body" in the room was probably right. But sometimes I wonder because the teacher across the hall seems very pleased to have a paraprofessional to assist her. Maybe I should find the time to talk to her about how she deals with the problems of integrating the paraprofessional into the program.

CASE STUDY TWO

Paraprofessional

I am Sara Tilson, and I have been a paraprofessional for almost twenty years. I started working in an elementary school and did lunchroom duty, monitored the playground, and helped the teacher in the classroom. About 18 years ago, the principal asked me how I would feel about working in a new program - something called Special Education. Yes, I've been here since before PL94-142. I've worked in several special education classes - everything from programs for kids with severe and multiple disabilities to resource rooms. I've seen teachers come and I've seen them go. But I'm still around because I love working with children. I've also made a lot of good friends in the building. And over the years I've had a chance to learn about what works and what doesn't work.

I've worked with some really terrific teachers and some that were not so good. In some cases, I was always the one who had to do all of the dirty work or the jobs that bored them - even though my title is Instructional Assistant and I'm supposed to work directly with the students. Other teachers thought they were being "good" to me by treating me as an equal with exactly the same responsibilities as theirs - even though I'm paid a whole lot less than they are. The folks that really drove me crazy were the ones "who had all the answers" and expected me to follow their rules to the "T". Despite these problems, if they were willing to take time to get to know me and discuss their expectations, we were usually able to work out our differences and get along well.

This year I've been assigned to work with a new teacher fresh out of college with no experience and a lot of new theories and bright ideas. On the first day of school we had a conference and she outlined what she wanted me to do. Basically, as I see it, she expects me to return to the status I had when I first started working twenty years ago. I am supposed to escort the children to the lunchroom, the playground, speech therapy, etc., keep the attendance records, do the toileting, keep the room neat and generally stay out of her way. She does let me play records and tell stories during rest period.

Now she has developed a "new" program plan for James and all of a sudden has asked me to help implement it. I don't think it's going to work because Mrs. Arthur tried something similar last year and we had to change it several times. (By the way, Mrs. Arthur was one of the best teachers I've ever worked with. She had a great sense of humor, always included me in on the fun things, changed diapers herself once in a while because she believed that toilet training was part of the instructional process, asked me what I thought about her ideas and what was going on in the class and when I talked, she listened.)

I'd like to speak to Ms. Burrell about James - but I've got a couple of problems. She hasn't asked me about what I think and she really seems more interested in trying out her theories than she is in hearing from me. In fact, if I had to describe her I'd say she is very dictatorial. Besides, the older I get the nicer it is to just do my job and go home rather than taking orders from someone who doesn't know half as much as I do about teaching. On the other hand - with a few minor changes the goals and activities she has planned for James would probably work.

Teacher

My name is Anne Burrell, and this is my first teaching job. My undergraduate degree is in early childhood education and I have a Master's in special education. I have had some teaching experience, but only as a student teacher. I've really been looking forward to being in charge of my own classroom, and putting the techniques I've worked so hard to learn to work. There was one thing, however, that no one prepared me for when I was in college - that is that I would be expected to supervise someone old enough to be my mother who also has more than 20 years experience. (I do think I'm lucky to have an aide to help out with all of the little things that have to be done in the classroom so I can spend a lot of indivdual time with the students.)

I really feel that as the teacher, I am the person who is responsible for what goes on in the classroom and that I will be held accountable for the good and the bad. That is why after thinking it over, I decided that the best way to use my aide was to have her do the non-instructional chores and clerical duties. Since Sara is so much older than I am and really has a lot of experience, I decided that it was very important to establish myself as the authority figure. This isn't always easy because working with Sara can be a little intimidating. She really gets along well with the other teachers in the building, and they all rave about her and tell me how lucky I am to have her.

There is a child in the class who seems to fit an almost textbook picture of a syndrome that I've read about - but have never seen. I'm sure that he will benefit from a new technique that has been developed to cope with such a youngster and his behavior. I have laid out, in great detail, the type of interventions that I want to use and have started to follow the program. I've decided, however, that if it is going to work Sara is going to have to be involved as well because everything has to be done consistently and systematically.

When I asked her to help implement the program - she didn't ask any questions or say anything - she just smiled a Mona Lisa smile. Later that day she started telling me about how terrific Mrs. Arthur was and what good ideas she had. She's done this before and I'm getting a little tired of it. In any event, I'm really more concerned about James and meeting his needs. I'd like to talk to Sara about it. But I don't want her to think I don't know what I'm doing and I certainly don't want to diminish my authority in the classroom.

A PROBLEM SOLVING EXERCISE

1. Describe the problem from the paraprofessional's point of view. (This may include attitudes, actions and other factors described in the Case Study)

2. Describe the problem from the teacher's point of view.

3. What behavior(s) does the teacher need to change?

4. What behavior(s) does the paraprofessional need to change?

5. Discuss and list a desired goal(s) for the team.

6. How can they work together to achieve the goal and be a better instructional team? What additional information, skills or other resources will they need to achieve the goal?

HANDOUT: PS -

# IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM

INSTRUCTIONS: As you begin to practice the communication skills and problem solving techniques you have learned in the last two sessions, ask and answer the following questions as a way to develop a plan to strengthen the work of the team.

1. Do you and your partner agree about appropriate roles and responsibilities for paraproffessionals in the classroom? If not, why not?

2. Why are you an effective team?

3. What is the nature of the problems that confront you and your partner? Are they created by differences in educational philosophy, attitudes, values, age, or other factors such as a lack of time to plan together?

4. What behaviors do you feel you need to change to improve the work of the team?

5. What behaviors do you feel your partner needs to change to improve the performance of the team?

6. What could the principal or another supervisor do to assist you and your partner to improve your performance or reduce tensions?

# EVALUATING AND COACHING THE PARAPROFESSIONAL

## Instructional Objectives

The teacher will be able to:

- evaluate and monitor on-the-job performance of paraprofessionals in order to identify skills that need to be improved,
- describe characteristics of adult learners, and
- use this information to develop systematic on-the-job training procedures for improving the performance of the paraprofessional.

## Overview

An examination of teachers' daily schedules and responsibilities finds that in addition to setting goals, planning, organizing, and coordinating activities for the students, themselves and paraprofessionals, they also monitor and assess how everything is working and determine what changes need to be made to achieve identified goals. The content and activities in this unit are designed to prepare the trainee to: 1) observe, monitor and assess the performance of paraprofessionals, 2) provide positive feedback about performance and 3) develop methods and procedures to coach paraprofessionals.

## Materials and Equipment

To conduct the activities in this unit you will need:

1. An overhead projector and/or chalkboard
2. TRANSPARENCY E/C 1 "The Process of Evaluation"
3. HANDOUT E/C 1 "An Observation Checklist"
4. HANDOUT E/C 2 "Suggestions for Monitoring and Coaching Paraprofessionals"
5. HANDOUT E/C 3 "Key Topics for Initial Conferences"
6. HANDOUT E/C 4 "Key Topics for Subsequent Conferences and Coaching Sessions"
7. Copies of Task Analyses developed by the trainees as part of the various unit on Setting Goals and Planning

## Pre-Session Procedures

1. Obtain copies of the school district's agency's administrative regulations, evaluation forms and other guidelines addressing formal procedures to evaluate paraprofessionals and the responsibilities of teachers in this process. (If the district has developed criteria for evaluating paraprofessionals you may want to make a HANDOUT or TRANSPARENCY that includes the information.)

2. Review the trainer material, use it and the local guidelines to develop a lecture on evaluating and monitoring the skills and work of paraprofessionals. Stress that even though teachers may not be designated as participants in the formal evaluation process, they are still responsible for informal assessment of paraprofessional and they need to use observable and measurable standards to determine skills of the paraprofessionals that need to be strengthened.

3. Develop a brief lecture on characteristics of adult learners and procedures the teacher can use to coach paraprofessionals.

Teaching Procedures

(There are more suggested activities designed for this unit than you will be able to use. Select the ones that will best meet the needs of the trainees.)

ACTIVITY #1 Deliver the lecture on evaluating and monitoring on-the-job performance of paraprofessionals.

ACTIVITY #2 Distribute the sample "Observation Checklist" and local guidelines and procedures for assessing paraprofessionals. Review the content and lead a discussion of the specific roles of teachers in both the formal and informal evaluation procedures. (The checklist is meant to serve as an example and is not inclusive. Among the other areas teachers might want to assess are behavior management skills, monitoring student performance, professional and ethical conduct particularly maintaining confidentiality, maintaining records and other administrative tasks.)

ACTIVITY #3 Deliver the lecture on characteristics of adult learners and procedures teachers can use to coach paraprofessionals. Distribute HANDOUTS E/C 2 through 5 and briefly describe the contents.

ACTIVITY #4 Divide the trainees into small groups of 5 or 6 people and ask them to 1) review the results of the Task Analyses activities, 2) select a task the group has determined to be appropriate for paraprofessionals to participate in, and 3) develop a plan for coaching a paraprofessional to perform the assigned task. After the methods and procedures have been developed ask two members (one role playing the teacher and the other the paraprofessional) to demonstrate the suggested procedures.

# EVALUATING AND COACHING

## The Process of Evaluation

Some school districts and other service providers have developed procedures and criteria for conducting formal on-the-job evaluations of paraprofessional performance. Most have not. The districts that have developed guidelines use various methods to conduct the evaluation. In some cases the teachers are part of the evaluation process, in other circumstances they may be asked by the building principal or other supervisory personnel to participate informally. Most supervisors would rather not have to be responsible for evaluating their co-workers. Evaluation is much easier to perform if supervisors remember the following: placing blame or criticizing is not the purpose of evaluation. Its aim is to help the person being evaluated to do a better job. Effective evaluations and performance reviews include the following components:

- Job requirements and skills to be evaluated must be clearly defined and communicated to paraprofessionals.

- Skills must be observable and the standard for determining whether or not they have been performed successfully must be measurable.

- Positive feedback about the results of an evaluation is an invaluable tool for directing performance, correcting problems, and conveying recognition of the contributions the paraprofessional is making to the overall instructional process.

- Informal monitoring and positive feedback on a regular basis will enable the paraprofessional to practice and strengthen skills in a systematic manner and will improve the productivity of the team.

- Results of the structured evaluations will enable the teacher to develop a strategy for on-the-job coaching that will supplement more formal training strategies for the paraprofessional including preservice, inservice, and continuing education.

## Components of Evaluation

The process of evaluation can be broken down into four components: pre-observation, observation, analysis, and pre-conferencing and coaching.

- The Pre-Observation Component includes: 1) defining the skill area to be evaluated, 2) establishing criteria for judging the performance, and 3) selecting or constructing an observation checklist. Information gained from task analyzing the program and administrative functions that

take place in the classroom can be used as the basis for defining the skills, establishing evaluation criteria, and developing checklists.

- The Observation Component is a single step procedure actually observing the performance and recording the results on the checklist.

- The Analysis Component includes: 1) looking at and analyzing the results of the observation, and 2) deciding what skills need to be strengthened.

- The Pre-Conferencing and Coaching Component includes three steps: 1) describing what tasks and behaviors will be evaluated prior to the evaluation, 2) giving feedback about the results of an evaluation to the paraprofessional, and 3) determining what strategies and procedures will be used to improve the performance and productivity of the paraprofessional.

Characteristics of Adult Learners

In order to develop an effective approach to coaching the paraprofessional it is important for the teacher to be aware of the distinctions in the ways adults learn and the ways young people learn. Over the last decade several researchers have developed significant concepts that have yielded some interesting insights with regard to adult learning styles. Their findings are synthesized below.

1. Adults are motivated to learn based on their career needs and/or other interests that learning will satisfy. The needs and interests they express are appropriate starting points for adult learning. Effective learning must build on current competencies and readiness to learn. Teachable moments peak at those points where a learning opportunity is coordinated with a recognition of the need-to-know.

2. Experience is the richest and best source for adult learning; as individuals mature they accumulate a growing reservoir of experiences which serve as a base for new learning. Analyses of prior work, volunteer and other experiences should be used by both the trainer and the adult learner to develop programs that meet the needs of the adult learner.

3. Most adults have a need to be self directing; consequently, they enjoy planning and carrying out their own learning exercises and formal curriculum development is less valuable for them than finding out what they need to learn.

4. Individual differences among people increase with age and developmental changes in thinking are reflected in problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity, therefore, adult education must provide for differences in learning style, time required for mastery, the place where learning will occur and pace of learning.

5. Adults learn best when they are active participants in a task. They like to try out what is being taught, therefore, coaching sessions should provide for active involvement of the paraprofessional and enable them to practice the skills they are "learning".

Feedback and Coaching

It is hard to know where evaluation ends and coaching or training begin. One of the most important factors in assuring that feedback after observation and systematic coaching take place is for the teacher and paraprofessional to establish a specific time to get together. Often, this is easier said than done because of the time constraints that confront the instructional team.

However, if the initial conference at the beginning of the year is used to establish a climate of trust and open communication in the classroom than it will be easier to develop effective procedures and methods to provide the paraprofessional with the basic skills s/he needs to be an active participant in the delivery of direct services. (Use the content in the handouts that are part of this unit as the basis for expanding the lecture on strategies for achieving effective feedback and coaching.)

## THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION

Components of Evaluation:

- **PRE-OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES** (defining skill/competency areas to be evaluated, establishing criteria for assessing the performance, constructing observation checklists and determining who will conduct the evaluation);

- **STRUCTURED SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION** (scheduling, observing and recording the results on a performance checklist);

- **ANALYSIS** (reviewing and analyzing the results of the evaluation and determining what skills need to be strengthened);

- **COACHING** (describing what tasks and skills will be evaluated and when and how they will be assessed, giving feedback about the results of the evaluation, determining strategies for conducting the coaching.)

# SAMPLE OBSERVATION CHECKLIST: EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Date: _____

RATING GUIDE:

1= EXCELLENT
2= VERY GOOD
3= AVERAGE
4= BELOW AVERAGE
5= POOR
6= NO OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE

Does the Paraprofessional?

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Give good/clear directions | | | | | | |
| 2. State clearly what the student is expected to do | | | | | | |
| 3. Follow the lesson plans developed by the teacher | | | | | | |
| 4. Teach sequentially | | | | | | |
| 5. Stay on task | | | | | | |
| 6. Use appropriate prompts to stimulate responses | | | | | | |
| 7. Provide reinforcement in a timely and consistent manner and use praise effectively | | | | | | |
| 8. Maintain control of the instructional situation | | | | | | |
| 9. Prepare instructional materials prior to starting the lesson | | | | | | |
| 10. Use a varied portfolio of instructional activities suggested by teacher | | | | | | |
| 11. Measure performance against objectives established by teacher | | | | | | |
| 12. Maintain accurate records | | | | | | |

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

# SUGGESTIONS FOR MONITORING AND COACHING PARAPROFESSIONALS

On-the-job coaching and monitoring of paraprofessionals should be an on-going process. Neither the teacher nor the paraprofessional learn everything they need to know and remember at once. It is critical for the teacher and paraprofessional to schedule a specific time to get together (no matter how difficult it may seem to be) to discuss job assignments, instructional techniques, ethical responsibilities and other issues that affect the instructional programs and classroom organization. Some of the strategies the teacher can use include:

- At the beginning of the year describe and clarify as thoroughly as possible instructional and non-instructional duties the paraprofessional will be expected to perform (see HANDOUTS E/C 2 and 3 for lists of suggested topics.)

- Review long and short term goals for each student and the individualized program designed to achieve them.

- Describe and demonstrate the type of behavior management and disciplinary systems to be used with each student, and review plans for dealing with emergencies of an emotional or physical nature. Stress the need for consistency at all times.

- Describe and demonstrate the teaching methods and procedures you prefer to use.

- Describe and demonstrate new skills or activities to the paraprofessional prior to beginning a new lesson or content area for the class or individual student. Ask the paraprofessional to practice the skill while you observe and make suggestions.

- Demonstrate and model various reinforcers, prompts, cues and other instructional procedures that will be used in the classroom.

- Encourage the paraprofessional to ask questions and if the paraprofessional indicates a need for more information in any area, follow through by obtaining printed information on the subject, and asking resource personnel and other support staff to demonstrate techniques for the paraprofessional.

- Make sure the paraprofessional understands the criteria you are using to assess his/her on-the-job performance. Share the items on the checklist or other evaluation instruments you are using to gather data you will use to monitor and coach the paraprofessional more effectively. The information you collect should provide you with the following data: 1) does the paraprofessional consistently repeat cues to the student, 2) what occurs if the student does what they are told to do, 3) what happens if the student does not comply with verbal requests, 4) does the paraprofessional change the student's program without consulting you, and 5) other data for which the teacher feels a need.

## SOME KEY TOPICS THAT NEED TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

The initial conference should be the beginning of a needs assessment that will continue throughout the paraprofessional's experience with the teacher. It should create an atmosphere that will allow the paraprofessional to feel free to ask questions and seek other assistance from the teacher.

The initial conference should include the following topics:

1. Introduction of self: Who you are, where you come from, etc.

2. Finding out about the paraprofessional: What is their previous work experience, volunteer experience, do they have any special skills/ talents, etc.

3. Orientation to the school's or agency's philosophy of education, rules and regulations.

4. Introduction to the teacher's short and long range plans for the class.

5. Discussion of the teacher's daily and weekly teaching schedules.

6. Discussion of expected lesson plan format.

7. Discussion of procedural matters (discipline, rules, structure, planning, future conferences, etc.)

8. Discussion of paraprofessional's role in the classroom.

9. Clarification of the paraprofessional's expectations and goals for himself/herself.

10. Discussion of the paraprofessional's self concept of strengths pertaining to this and other experiences; discussion of the kinds of help needed by the paraprofessional.

11. Discussion of the kinds of help needed by the paraprofessional.

12. Provision for planning a program of early observations, structured support, and independent support role activities.

13. Discussion of evaluation criteria that will be used to assess the paraprofessional's work performance.

## TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED IN COACHING SESSIONS

The topics selected for each session will vary. The teacher and paraprofessional will identify specific topics that they consider to be of high priority as the team changes and progresses in their performance level. Some general topics that can be handled well in the setting are:

- Individualized Education Plans (IEP/s)
- Lesson Planning (Long and Short Range Plans)
- Teaching Strategies, Techniques and Characteristics
- Pupil Progress-Evaluation
- Behavior Maintenance and Management Procedures
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- District Philosophy
- Ordering Supplies
- Classroom Management
- Materials and Resources
- Pupil Records Including Cumulative Records, Paraprofessional/Teacher Liability
- School-Community Events
- Employment Procedures
- Legal, Ethical and Professional Responsibilities of the Paraprofessional Including Confidentiality
- Objective Observation Skills
- Recording Data

PLANNING FOR CHANGE
(A FINAL ACTIVITY)

## Instructional Objectives

The teacher will:

- identify a supervisory skill s/he wants to improve;
- develop a specific goal(s) to meet the identified need;
- develop systematic strategies to achieve the goal(s); and
- develop evaluation criteria and set timelines for achieving the goal(s).

## Overview

As a result of participating in these training sessions, the trainees have been given a lot of information about stratagies they can use to improve their performance as classroom managers. The purpose of this final activity is to enable each trainee to develop and implement a personalized plan for changing and improving his/her management skills.

## Materials and Equipment

To conduct the activities in this unit you will need:

1. HANDOUT PC-1 "Planning Worksheet"
2. The Performance/Skills Survey completed earlier by the trainees.

## Teaching Procedures

1. Distribute a copy of the Worksheet to each of the participants. Ask them to use the results of the Performance/Skills Survey completed earlier to determine the skill(s) they want to improve. Then, using the worksheet, develop the strategies they will use to achieve their goal. Ask the participants to complete the plan at home and return it to you. Schedule a mutually convenient time for you to observe the trainee and provide feedback based on your observations; or

2. If the training schedule does not allow enough time for observations and follow-up, ask the participants to complete the Worksheet during the final class and share their goals and plans with you and the other trainees.

# PLANNING WORKSHEET

DIRECTIONS:

Review your responses to the items on the "Performance and Skills Inventory" you completed at the beginning of the training. Choose one skill area you want to improve. Use the steps outlined on this Planning Worksheet to develop a plan for increasing your supervisory or management skills. Respond to each item as fully as you can; that is respond as if you were writing this so another person would become as completely aware of the problem as you are; this means being frank, honest, and open with yourself.

I. Identify a supervisory skill you would like to improve and describe it.

II. How will this skill improve the organization and operation in your classroom?

III. What are some of the steps (strategies) you will use to achieve the objective including a time table?

IV. What resources, (human, time, equipment) will you need to achieve the objective?

V. Describe some of the methods you will use to determine whether or not the solution(s) have worked.

PART IV

# PREPARING TEACHERS TO BE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISORS AND CLASSROOM MANAGERS: REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is divided into two parts. The first contains the list of resources and references cited in the manual. The supplementary list in the second part includes information about resources for trainers conducting adult education programs.

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## RESOURCES

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Fimian, M.J., Fafard, M.B. and Howell, K.W. A Teachers Guide to Human Resources in Special Education: Paraprofessionals, Volunteers and Peer Tutors, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1984. This book is a resource for teachers, administrators, and teacher educators.

The Kansas State Department of Education, Division of Special Education, 120 East 10th Street, Topeka, Kansas 66612. The Division of Special Education has produced a series of audio-visual materials dealing with the training and employment of Paraprofessionals in Special Education. The materials may be borrowed from the state department at no cost to the user.

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Schulman, Eveline D. Intervention in Human Services: A Guide to Skills and Knowledge, Third Edition, C.Z. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1982. This book serves as a good resource for background material and selected activities and exercises to strengthen and enhance communication and problem solving skills.

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